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STARS STRIPES.®

Volume 73, No. 2148

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MIDEAST EDITION

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2015

stripes.com

Free to Deployed Areas

A soldier with Joint Forces Command - United Assistance lead Ebola training in Monrovia, Liberia, in November.
Courtesy of the U.S. Army



AFGHANISTAN

US agencies adjust to shifting landscape

By HEATH DRUZIN
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — The largest U.S. aid group and the government's top watchdog in Afghanistan — two high-profile organizations inextricably linked and often at odds — are facing new challenges with fewer U.S. troops to provide security in a still dangerous environment.

One consequence of the drawdown of U.S. forces "is a reduction in their ability to protect us, to get us into places where we need to be," said Dave Schwendiman, director of forward operations for the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, which keeps a close

watch on how U.S. taxpayer dollars in Afghanistan are spent.

'A part of our mission will be to reassure nervous Afghans that we're not walking away from Afghanistan.'

Larry Sampler
USAID

American troop levels have dropped to less than 11,000 this year from a high of more than 100,000. In 2012, the international community pledged \$16 billion in continuing

aid to Afghanistan through 2016, with roughly half of that coming from the U.S.

SIGAR and the taxpayer-funded United States Agency for International Development, the largest aid group in Afghanistan, are committed to continuing operations in Afghanistan, but officials acknowledge they are increasingly constrained in where they can go and what they can do because of continued fighting between Afghan security forces and insurgents.

SEE AGENCIES ON PAGE 3

GOING AFTER NON-CONVENTIONAL WARFARE

Obama's strategy favors humanitarian intervention over geopolitics

By JULIET EILPERIN and STEVEN MUFSON
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — If there is to be war, the fight against Ebola is President Barack Obama's type of war. The enemy fires no bullets and carries no bombs; it doesn't use social media to recruit fighters and rally supporters. And the fighting can best be done by intelligent professionals who don't try to kill people, but to save them.

On Wednesday, Obama celebrated the progress America and its allies had made against the deadly virus since the administration launched a military and civilian effort in September. While the president emphasized it was too soon to declare "mission accomplished" — as President George W. Bush did about Iraq in 2003 — Obama said, "we're shifting our focus from

fighting the epidemic to now extinguishing it."

"Last summer, as Ebola spread in West Africa, overwhelming public health systems and threatening to cross more borders, I said that fighting this disease had to be more than a national security priority, but an example of American leadership," Obama told an audience at the White House's South Court Auditorium as a group of military, civilian and health professionals stood behind him. "We have risen to the challenge."

Wednesday's event provided fresh evidence of how the White House has elevated non-conventional threats — including pandemics and climate change — to the top of its national security agenda, while de-emphasizing more traditional threats.

SEE STRATEGY ON PAGE 5

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I had to make myself pay attention to the road because I was like, 'Wow, that is really strange.'"

—Jackie Skaggs, Grand Teton National Park spokeswoman, on the cloud formations seen over Grand Teton mountain Thursday

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MIDEAST

Protests mark Bahrain uprising

Activists rally on fourth anniversary of pro-democracy demonstrations

By REEM KHALIFA
The Associated Press

MANAMA, Bahrain—Protesters took to the streets in predominantly Shiite areas of Bahrain and set tires alight along a major highway Saturday to mark the fourth anniversary of widespread protests calling for reform in the tiny island nation.

The demonstrations commemorate the start of Arab Spring-inspired protests on Feb. 14, 2011, dominated by the country's Shiite majority that sought greater political rights from the Western-allied Sunni monarchy.

Authorities crushed the protests within weeks after getting help from Saudi and Emirati security forces. But repeated rounds of talks between the government and the opposition have failed to resolve the deadlock.

Pearl Square, the focal point for the protest movement in the capital, Manama, was bulldozed as part of the initial crackdown and remains sealed off.

In largely Shiite areas on the capital's outskirts, young activists armed with rocks and gasoline bombs frequently block roads and fight police. Some have planted bombs that have killed police.

Several prominent opposition activists are in prison, face trial or have fled.

Among those behind bars is Shiite cleric Ali Salman, the head of Bahrain's leading Shiite opposition group, al-Wefaq, which led a boycott of November's parliamentary election. He faces charges of incitement to forcibly topple the government. He has denied the allegations.

Many Bahrainis say they feel increasingly disillusioned.

"Young people deserve to have alternative solutions for the political crisis in Bahrain," nursery school teacher Najeeba Sayed



PHOTOS BY HASAN JAMALI/AP

Riot police fire tear gas to disperse Bahraini anti-government protesters waving flags and carrying pictures of jailed Shiite cleric Sheikh Ali Salman, head of the largest opposition political society, Friday in the Manama suburb of Bilad al-Qadeem, Bahrain.

Fadhel said. "I still feel voiceless and without rights."

Saturday's protests were far smaller than those of the early days of the protest movement. Opposition activists cannot gather in large groups because security forces use checkpoints, tear gas and other methods to prevent them from getting on major highways.

Authorities earlier in the week warned Bahrainis to stay away "from activities that could negatively affect security or general order" and said those who engage in violence will be held accountable.

The country is home to the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet, and is part of the U.S.-led coalition against the Islamic State militant group.



A Bahraini anti-government protester wears swim goggles to protect her eyes against tear gas fired by riot police during clashes following a march Friday.

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WAR/MILITARY

Agencies: USAID, SIGAR plan to rely more on local staff for projects

FROM FRONT PAGE

Larry Sampler, who leads USAID's Afghanistan and Pakistan missions, said the funding levels likely will decline and the agency's era of big infrastructure projects is largely over, but he wants the agency to continue pursuing "relentless progress" in Afghanistan, including an ambitious, \$200 million project to improve conditions for women.

"It's not a withdrawal — the United States is not leaving Afghanistan," he said in a recent phone interview. "A part of our mission will be to reassure nervous Afghans that we're not walking away from Afghanistan."

SIGAR officials say that despite constraints on their movements, they aren't planning to cut staff anytime soon. Their mandate is to operate in the country until there is less than \$250 million in U.S. tax dollars allocated to Afghanistan.

"We have our mandate, and our mandate is to do the work we do," said Matt Dove, SIGAR's Kabul-based deputy inspector general for audits and inspections. "Until we're told otherwise, we're going to continue to do it at a rate and size we determine best."

USAID has spent roughly \$17 billion on reconstruction projects across Afghanistan since the U.S. invaded in 2001 to oust the Taliban regime. USAID's success has been mixed. There have been undeniable gains in areas such as women's rights, education, and health care. Officials with USAID point to the 2014 Afghan presidential election as a step in the right direction, though it was bitterly contested over massive voter fraud. It was only settled with U.S. intervention that helped broker a power-sharing arrangement between President Ashraf Ghani and his election rival, Abdullah Abdullah, who was named to the newly created post of chief executive officer.

But the aid effort in Afghanistan has come under heavy scrutiny in recent years for wastefulness, poor planning and lack of transparency, flaws laid out in stark detail largely by SIGAR reports. A prime example of a project that has not succeeded despite massive funding is the Kajaki Dam in southern Afghanistan. Tens of millions of dollars over budget and 10 years behind schedule, few outside of USAID expect the power project ever to be completed.

And in January, USAID suspended one of its largest nonprofit contractors, International Relief and Development, for "serious misconduct" after giving the company \$2.4 billion since 2007, much of it for reconstruction in Afghanistan.

'No substitute for being there'

The key to SIGAR's efforts to shine a spotlight on aid initiatives in the country is the ability of investigators to get out in the field to see projects up close. That has become more and more difficult as U.S. bases closed and American security assets — from both the State Department and the military — have shrunk.

"There's no substitute for being there. There's no substitute for being exposed to this place outside the walls," Schwendiman said in an interview at the organization's Kabul offices in the heavily fortified U.S. Embassy complex.

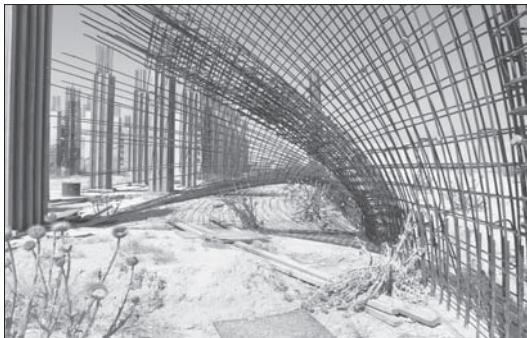
That has become more difficult with the reduction in the number of U.S. troops. In addition, the 2013 attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya, in which the U.S. ambassador and three others were killed, has made regional security office advisers extra cautious, Schwendiman said.

Benghazi has made the diplomatic security people and embassy people rightly nervous about having anything like that



MATT MILLHAM/Stars and Stripes

Seen in 2011, the Kajaki Dam and power station is a project begun by the U.S. in 1953 to bring development to southern Afghanistan. Despite millions of dollars invested, the project in 2015 is 10 years behind schedule.



Courtesy of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction

Reinforcement rods sag at the unfinished Justice Center in Parwan province, Afghanistan. This photo was part of a May 15, 2013, report by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction.

happen here, and they'll tell you only this is one of the scariest places they operate," Schwendiman said.

Both USAID and SIGAR are planning increased reliance on local staff and contractors to get to areas that would be treacherous for Americans.

"In some cases, we do still have Americans come out and visit a program," Sampler said. "In other cases, we may use technology, overflights or crowdsourcing technology. We have to do that because we can't get out to all parts of Afghanistan."

Schwendiman sees another big loss in the drawdown of troops.

"When there were 100,000 people on the ground, there were 200,000 eyes and 200,000 ears that were listening and watching things that were going on, and

bitterly about SIGAR, saying the inspector general organization criticizes with insufficient evidence and makes it even harder to carry out an already difficult reconstruction effort.

"Are we on the record?" Sampler joked when asked his thoughts about SIGAR's criticisms of USAID, before taking a diplomatic line: "They ask these hard questions and force us to come up with answers."

Different perspectives

Looking back on the past 13 years of reconstruction in Afghanistan, officials from the two organizations had significantly different takes.

"Perhaps not since the fall of the Taliban has Afghanistan faced such a significant moment in its history," USAID Director Rajiv Shah said in the agency's December newsletter. "The Afghan people recently voted in record numbers in a historic election, the Afghan military leads security operations throughout the country and Afghanistan has made more strides than any other country in the past decade in measures of health, education and economic growth."

From SIGAR's perspective, some key aspects of the reconstruction effort have improved since the watchdog started taking a more aggressive stance in 2012, namely sustainability of projects and coordination among different organizations. But over-ambition and lack of planning still plague reconstruction efforts, and the mistakes of the past continue to reverberate, Schwendiman said.

"In 2008, 2009, 2010, the checkbook was just a checkbook and the money would just pour, it would flow," Schwendiman said. "What we were doing was feeding a culture of corruption, and we are paying for it and ... Ghani is paying for it. It's a legacy we ought not to be too proud of."

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Privately, USAID officials complain

MILITARY

Dig site may hold Marine missing from Vietnam War

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

The newly established Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency has dispatched a remains recovery team to the Cambodian island of Koh Tang, where three Marines were left behind following the final battle of the Vietnam War.

The excavation site is believed to hold the remains of Lance Cpl. Joseph Hargrove, Pfc. Gary Hall or Pvt. Danny Marshall, according to official documents from DPMAA's predecessor, the Joint Prisoners of War, Missing in Action Accounting Command.

The three-man gun team was left behind in the confusion of a troop withdrawal following a brutal May 15, 1975, battle between about 200 U.S. Marines and entrenched Cambodian Khmer Rouge soldiers in what became known as the "Mayaguez Incident."

The dig began Jan. 14 and is expected to run through the end of March.

The location of the excavation site has not been made public, but it's likely to be one of two areas where the heaviest fighting occurred. In 2013, a seven-member JPAC investigation team spent a week on the island's East and West beaches.

Months later, JPAC told Stars and Stripes that the team did find enough evidence to bring one site before the administrative body that decides whether to allocate funds for a dig.

A recovery operation, such as the one ongoing on Koh Tang, means that the site was approved by the board, and the likelihood of finding remains is high.

Officials have declined numerous requests from Stars and Stripes for information related to the excavations.

"This is an ongoing mission and details can't be discussed at this time," DPMAA spokeswoman Lt. Col. Melinda Morgan said.

However, the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office has declassified some of the documents since the investigative dig occurred. Heavily redacted copies are housed in Texas Tech University's Vietnam War archives.

According to a document dated November 2013, investigators found a water wheel where former Khmer Rouge soldiers claimed they killed and buried an American soldier after the battle.

Any American remains found there would likely belong to Har-

grove, because most accounts say that Hall and Marshall were taken to the mainland and executed.

In addition to Hargrove, Hall and Marshall, two other servicemembers remain missing from the battle.

Lance Cpl. Ashton Loney's body was left behind on West Beach in the haste of the withdrawal, and former accounts claimed he was buried on the beach. There is no public record of his body being recovered, or his remains identified.

Air Force Staff Sgt. Elwood Rumbaugh was lost at sea near a downed helicopter.

Although that site has been located, according to the Texas Tech documents, it has not been explored at the time due to inclement weather. No other recovery operations have been announced.

Left behind

In May 1975, Khmer Rouge forces captured the SS Mayaguez, an American container ship, several nautical miles off the coast of the Cambodian island of Poulo Wai. It didn't take long for President Gerald Ford to authorize a rescue operation.

In the battle that followed, 38 U.S. servicemembers were killed and approximately 50 were wounded. The ship and crew were released shortly after.

Immediately after the battle, when it became apparent that Hargrove, Hall and Marshall were unaccounted for, Navy SEALs and Marines asked to make a rescue attempt for the missing men but the request was denied. U.S. Navy ships were recalled from the area, closing the chapter on U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia.

While accounts of enemy combatants differ, most say that Hargrove was captured on Koh Tang and was executed. Hall and Marshall were taken to the mainland and executed there.

Since the early 1990s, documents show that JPAC investigators have excavated sites, both on the mainland and on Koh Tang, and have collected numerous fragments and sets of remains, including as recently as 2008.

During an excavation in 2008, a



Above: Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency workers has been excavating a site on Koh Tang, an island off the coast of Cambodia where officials believe they might find the remains of one of three Marines who were left behind following the last battle of the Vietnam War.

Left: The body of Marine Lance Cpl. Ashton Loney lies on West Beach covered by a poncho after Loney was killed during the battle of Koh Tang.

Stars and Stripes photos

excavations on Koh Tang and subsequent analysis have been made public.

Running out of time

Members of Hargrove's family hope his remains will soon be returned.

"By them being on the island, I hope it is a good sign that we will be receiving Joseph's remains soon," said Hargrove's cousin, Cary Turner. "I'll keep praying they will do the right thing and send Joseph home."

But, the time to recover the remains is running short.

A Russian consortium leased the island from the Cambodian government in 2008, and construction has already begun on what will one day be a casino, resorts, a seven-hotel complex and luxury villas aimed at drawing 300,000 tourists annually from China, Korea and Japan.

"POW/MIA investigators will lose access to the island once the investment company moves in full-time to develop the resort," an accounting document from March 2013 said. "A Cambodian POW/MIA committee member emphasized the urgency of conducting Tang Island investigations as soon as possible."

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set of remains that was unearthed was determined to likely be Caucasian, according to Charles Ray, former ambassador to Cambodia and deputy assistant secretary of defense for POW/Missing Personnel Affairs.

JPAC documents state four samples were sent for analysis. It's not made clear in the documents if the samples are something as small as bone fragments or as large as full sets of remains.

No results from any of the

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MILITARY

Strategy: Obama praises fight against Ebola as model for modern warfare

FROM FRONT PAGE

In an interview with the website Vox posted this week, Obama said the media "absolutely" overstate the threat of terrorism compared with long-term problems such as global warming and diseases that cross national borders.

But even as Obama plays down more conventional foreign policy issues, they keep yanking the agenda back. Chaos in Yemen, fighting in Ukraine, the battle against the Islamic State, the persistent strength of the Taliban and the nuclear weapons potential in Iran all remain pressing, often taking precedence over longer-term challenges.

"He thinks that these other [geopolitical] crises are manageable and not existential and should be placed into context," said Thomas Wright, director of a project on international order and strategy at the Brookings Institution. "I think they're more serious than that. They do rise to challenging the international order as a whole."

One retired four-star general, who asked for anonymity in order to speak frankly about the administration, said Obama's worldview has undermined the military's ability to rein in chaos in places like Yemen and Afghanistan.

"We are always shooting behind the duck. You see that with Iran, Putin and Syria," the general said. "We reintroduced forces to Iraq but nowhere near enough to be decisive. Obama sent more troops to fight Ebola than the Islamic State."

As of February 9, the total number of U.S. troops in Iraq was 2,630, a number that under a White House plan is expected to rise to nearly 3,000. There were 2,800 troops serving in West Africa at one point, though it has dropped to 1,300 and will be cut to 100 by the end of April.

Obama on Wednesday deployed military language to praise the Ebola fight as a model for modern warfare. "This was a wake-up call," he said. "In the 21st century, we cannot build moats around our countries. There are no drawbridges to be pulled up. We shouldn't try." Instead, he said, this challenge called for



LINDSAY D. ROMAN/Provided by the U.S. Army

U.S. Army Spc. Kristal Calderon of the 35th Signal Brigade practices carefully donning and removing protective equipment after a class at the brigade's logistical warehouse at Fort Gordon, Ga., in October 2014.

better laboratories and hospitals — things a good community organizer might seek.

But for the United States, humanitarian intervention isn't simply a 21st century phenomenon. In 1992, in an operation dubbed Restore Hope, President George H.W. Bush sent 10 times as many troops to deliver food aid to Somalia as Obama sent to West Africa. But that foray ended with American troops getting sucked into the country's sectarian battles and beating a retreat in 1994.

In their short mission in West Africa, U.S. troops have been able to avoid that, and the president and his aides have been able to hail them not only for reflecting American values but for serving the nation's core interests. "This is not charity," he said. "These investments we make overseas are in our self-interest."

Describing health-care worker Brett Sedgewick, who volunteered with a nonprofit organization to train safe burial teams in Liberia, Obama said, "that's who we are — big-hearted and

'It's crystal-clear that the U.S. made a huge difference in the Ebola response.'

Tom Inglesby

Tom Inglesby, director of the Center for Health Security at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center

optimistic, reflecting the can-do spirit of the American people. ... These values — American values — matter to the world."

But sometimes big-heartedness is not enough. Unlike the recent fight against Ebola, other instances of humanitarian intervention get tangled up in conventional conflicts.

Nearly four years ago, the president used both frameworks — humanitarian and national interests — to explain to the American people that he had authorized bombing raids against Libya to prevent then-leader Moammar Gadhafi from committing a massacre in Benghazi. Obama said such a massacre "would have reverberated across the region

and stained the conscience of the world."

"It was not in our national interest to let that happen," the president said in a prime-time address. "I refused to let that happen." Yet the president did not choose to intervene with troops. And while the U.S. bombing raids helped prevent a tragedy in Benghazi, ever since Gadhafi's fall, factional fighting has plagued the country.

Obama also invoked humanitarian concerns when he authorized strikes last summer to aid the Yazidis trapped by the Islamic State on a mountain in northern Iraq.

But even when it comes transnational challenges like disease and climate change, military

involvement cannot separate itself from traditional issues about geopolitics.

"I do think that in a sense he's right. Our national security is affected by things other than geopolitics," said James Dobbins, a senior fellow at Rand Corp. and veteran diplomat who worked on the Balkans, Afghanistan, Haiti and Somalia. But, he said, clearly the biggest threats continue to come from states rather than non-states. Moreover, Dobbins added, "you're not going to solve climate change, or terrorism, or endemic disease without state action."

In the case of Ebola, at least, Obama's strategy appears to be paying some dividends.

Sen. Christopher Coons, D-Del., the only U.S. lawmaker to travel to West Africa during the Ebola outbreak, said the declining number of cases there shows the president has tackled "seemingly intractable, but also vitally important, challenges."

Tom Inglesby, director of the Center for Health Security at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, said that the world has learned that "we're going to have to move really quickly" to tamp down epidemics. And it has even learned from U.S. mistakes, such as building expensive medical units that were ultimately not needed in Liberia.

"It's crystal-clear that the U.S. made a huge difference in the Ebola response," Inglesby said. America not only mobilized forces on the ground, Inglesby said, but spurred nations such as Britain and France to ramp up their efforts. "You saw other countries started to do more things in short order after the U.S. started," he said.

Obama said U.S. troops would leave behind thousands of foreign and African civilians still battling the virus. As a sign of how the battle is not over, the World Health Organization reported Wednesday that the total number of reported cases in West Africa rose for the second consecutive week during the first week of February, to 144. The total cases rose 60 percent in Guinea, from 39 to 65, and "transmission remains widespread in Sierra Leone," the WHO said.

Ebola cases prompt mini-quarantine in Sierra Leone capital

BY CLARENCE ROY-MACAULAY
The Associated Press

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone — Sierra Leone imposed a quarantine in a fishing district of the capital city, Freetown, after at least five new Ebola cases were confirmed there, an official said Saturday.

The measure, imposed Friday, affects the coastal district of Aberdeen, which contains both upscale hotels and informal settlements, said OB Sissay, director of the Situation Room at the National Ebola Response Center. At least some of the new cases included fishermen who had gone out in a boat but returned complaining of stomach pains and

were sent to a hospital for tests.

A control center has been established in the area, and contact tracing and surveillance officers have been deployed, Sissay said.

Sierra Leone has seen nearly 11,000 confirmed, probable and suspected Ebola cases during the worst Ebola outbreak in history, the most of any country, according to the World Health Organization. Despite a drop in cases, transmission in Sierra Leone remains widespread, with 76 new cases confirmed in the previous week, WHO said Wednesday.

The continued cases and quarantine are further evidence that getting to zero cases will be "a bumpy ride," Sissay said.

"The number goes down one day and the next it goes up. There are some people who are celebrating when the number of cases goes down, and these people think it is the end of Ebola," he said.

In September, when Ebola was still raging in West Africa, Sierra Leone imposed a sweeping three-day nationwide lockdown to battle the deadly disease.

Wednesday's update from WHO also reported "a sharp increase" of cases in Guinea — 65 compared with 39 the previous week.

Liberia, meanwhile, reported only three new cases. The United States announced Tuesday that it was preparing to withdraw nearly all of its troops fighting Ebola

in West Africa, leaving just 100 in Liberia to continue working with the country's military, regional partners and U.S. civilians.

The United Nations children's

agency said Friday that plans were still in place to begin reopening Liberia's schools next week after seven months of closures caused by Ebola.

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WAR ON TERRORISM

Base's attackers were disguised as Iraqi soldiers

Assault preceded by capture of town

BY LOVEDAY MORRIS
AND MUSTAFA SALIM
The Washington Post

BAGHDAD — The Islamic State fighters who attacked a base used by U.S. troops on Friday were suicide bombers disguised as Iraqi soldiers, an Iraqi official said.

Iraqi security forces supported by "surveillance assets" from the U.S.-led coalition killed eight militants who tried to carry out a "direct attack" on the Al Asad Air Base in Iraq's Anbar province at 7:20 a.m., the Combined Joint Task Force said in a statement. The men were would-be suicide bombers who sought to enter the base disguised as Iraqi army soldiers, said Sulaiman al-Kubbaisi, a spokesman for Anbar's provincial council.

Three of the militants reportedly were able to set off their explosives, before the rest were killed.

The attack came a day after militants took control of most of Baghdadi, a town less than five miles from the base, where 320 U.S. servicemembers have been training Iraqi troops and tribal fighters.

U.S. forces were "several kilometers" from the attack and were at no stage under direct threat, the statement said. Still, the targeting of a base hosting U.S. troops underscored the risk that Americans could be drawn into real engagement with the militants.

President Barack Obama has made a formal request for congressional authority to use military force against the Islamic State, a move that critics argue could increase that risk.

Rear Adm. John Kirby, a Pentagon spokesman, estimated that 20 to 25 Islamic State fighters carried out the attack while disguised as members of the Iraqi army. He said an initial group of "several" fighters detonated suicide vests that they were wearing under their uniforms.

Kirby said that he did not know how far the Islamic State fighters were able to get but that U.S. officials believe all of them were killed during a firefight with Iraqi soldiers. He said there was no indication that the Iraqi soldiers suffered any casualties.

"At no time were U.S. troops anywhere near the fighting," Kirby told reporters.

Local officials and tribal fight- ers said the attackers did not pass the base perimeter.

The Islamic State has used similar tactics in the past. Iraqi troops welcomed militants disguised in army uniforms onto another base in Anbar province in September, in an attack that resulted in the deaths of hundreds of soldiers.

"We readily admit that al-Anbar is a contested region," Kirby said in an interview on CNN. "But ... this is a huge, sprawling base, roughly the size of Boulder, Colorado," and it has "mini-bases inside the big base."

Kirby said of the U.S. trainers and advisers, "there's no question that they're close to danger." Even though they do not have a ground combat mission, "they have the right to defend themselves," he said. "And should they ever feel under threat, they certainly have the right, the responsibility, the obligation to shoot back."

According to a statement from Anbar's provincial council, about 1,000 Islamic State fighters launched Thursday's attack on Baghdadi, a strategic location due to its proximity to the Ayn al-Asad base. Major buildings in the town, including the police station and local council building, are in militant hands, according to tribal fighters and local officials.

The capture of Baghdadi, which remained under militant control Friday, demonstrates the continued ability of the Islamic State to stay on the attack despite coalition airstrikes and talk of a looming counteroffensive on major cities held by the group, which is also known as ISIS, ISIL and, in Arabic, Daesh. U.S. officials maintain that the militants are largely on the defensive.

The U.S. military said its ground forces were not involved in the fighting in Baghdadi but that Anbar remains under "severe threat" by Islamic State fighters. In December, the Pentagon denied local news reports that U.S. forces were involved in direct combat with Islamic State fighters near the base.

While not tasked with combat, U.S. trainers in Iraq are authorized to use force in self-defense. The Authorization for the Use of Military Force, requested by Obama on Wednesday, would leave flexibility for Special Operations forces to assist local forces, the president said. It would allow the continuation of airstrikes and training programs in Iraq and Syria for the next three years but prohibit "enduring offensive ground combat operations."



KARIM KADIM/AP

Blood donations

A policeman prepares to donate blood for wounded security forces and Shiite militias who fought with the Islamic State group as he registers at a school in Baghdad, Iraq, on Friday.

Obama war request unites Congress: Both sides hate it

By WILLIAM DOUGLAS

McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama has achieved something unexpected in Congress: a degree of bipartisanship. There's enough in his proposal for war powers against the Islamic State for both Democrats and Republicans to hate.

Too restrictive on ground troops, hawkish Republicans say. Overly broad language with no endgame in sight, several wary Democrats and Republicans with libertarian streaks complain.

Obama's authorization for use of military force request against the Islamic State faces a rough go in a skeptical Congress that appears in no hurry to act on it. While most members of the House of Representatives and the

Senate say they have the will to address Islamic State activities, they have serious doubts about whether Obama's authorization request is the way to do it.

"There are many questions, I think, that need to be asked about this authorization before the Congress can move forward," said Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo. "The principal question, however, will continue to be: Do we have a strategy?"

Obama's request for a temporary, three-year authorization of war powers opens the door to ground troops — which Obama for months flatly ruled out. But it also calls for their use against the Islamic State in "limited circumstances," which include the use of special operations forces to take action against the group's leadership.

The request has divided Con-

gress between those who want more warming power than the president seeks and those who want more limits.

Among those in the "do more" caucus: Sens. John McCain and Lindsey Graham and House Speaker John Boehner. McCain, R-Ariz., flatly rejected language that he feels places restrictions on the use of ground troops.

The "do less" group complained that Obama's request goes too far, especially with its call to keep the 2001 war authorization on the books. Put Rep. Adam Schiff and Sen. Tim Kaine in that caucus.

Liberal Democrats weren't the only ones searching for clarity. Rep. Raul Labrador, R-Idaho, a tea party favorite, said that before he can support a war powers vote, "I need to know that we have an existential threat to the U.S. first, and I'm not convinced of that."

Fighting in Yemen leaves 26 dead

The Associated Press

SANAA, Yemen — Heavy fighting between Shiite rebels and Sunni tribesmen in southern Yemen has left 26 dead, security and military officials said Saturday, as tens of thousands of people marched to protest the rebels' rule.

The violence was the latest to hit volatile Yemen, where the rebels have seized power but do not control all of the country and are being confronted by a powerful branch of al-Qaida. United

Nations negotiations, headed by envoy Jamal Benomar, to resolve the deadlock have stalled.

The rebels, known as Houthis, were supported by army troops when they fought the tribesmen in Bayda province in clashes that began the night earlier. The Houthis lost 16 fighters and the tribesmen 10, the officials said.

Also Saturday, the Netherlands, Spain and the United Arab Emirates became the latest countries to shut down embassy operations in Sanaa, announcing they were evacuating diplomats. Saudi Ara-

bia, Italy, Germany, the United States, France and Britain have taken similar measures amid the growing political uncertainty, threatening international isolation for the country.

Yemen's elected president resigned last month after a several-month power struggle with the rebels, who have controlled Sanaa since September. The rebels have since dissolved the parliament, and President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi and his Cabinet ministers remain under rebel house arrest.

NATION

Shadow of Clinton war vote hangs over other 2016 hopefuls

By JULIE PACE

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In 2002, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton cast a vote in favor of the Iraq War that later would come to haunt her presidential campaign.

Now, a new crop of senators eyeing the White House — Republicans Marco Rubio of Florida, Rand Paul of Kentucky and Ted Cruz of Texas — will face a similar choice over authorizing military action in the Middle East.

A vote in favor of President Barack Obama's use-of-force resolution would give the potential candidates a share of the responsibility for the outcome of military action in a combustible region. And as Clinton learned well, the public's support for a military campaign can fade quickly, making the long-term implications of the vote difficult to predict.

Obama asked lawmakers last week to approve a three-year offensive against the Islamic State group and affiliated forces. His request includes no constraints on geographical boundaries but would bar "enduring offensive combat" — intentionally vague

language that some lawmakers fear leaves open the prospect of a U.S.-led ground war.

So far, most of the 2016 hopefuls currently in Congress have side-stepped questions about how they would vote on Obama's measure, which could be amended before they have to say yes or no. Among Republicans, Rubio has been perhaps the most specific in outlining his views, saying he opposes the president putting constraints on his ability to use military force against an enemy.

"What we need to be authorizing the president to do is to destroy them and to defeat them, and send the commander in chief — both the one we have now and the one who will follow — to put in place the tactics, the military tactics, necessary to destroy and defeat ISIL," Rubio said, using a common acronym for the Islamic State group.

A spokesman for Paul said Friday that the senator is reviewing the legislation but has not decided how he would vote. Cruz has called for Congress to "strengthen" the legislation by making sure the president is committed to clear objectives.

Frustrated GOP tastes limits of majority control

By ERICA WERNER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Congressional Republicans returned to their districts for a weeklong recess Friday no closer to a solution to keeping the Homeland Security Department funded past this month. And many were beginning to fear they'd have little to show from a standoff with minority Senate Democrats and President Barack Obama over immigration policy.

Indeed, a month after assuming control of the Senate as well as the House, Republicans are finding, to their chagrin, that important things haven't changed.

"I suppose elections have consequences, except in the United States Senate," complained GOP Rep. Mick Mulvaney of South Carolina, who like many House Republicans hoped for more after the party assumed full control of Congress.

"Tell me how it would be different if Harry Reid were still running the place," Mulvaney added, naming the Senate Democratic leader who was booted into the minority in November's midterm elections.

Their party is now setting the floor schedule and calling hearings, but Republicans are six votes short of the 60 needed to advance most legislation. And Senate rules grant numerous rights

to the minority party. That means if Democrats remain united, they have the ability to block GOP bills just as they did while in the majority.

And Democrats have been united against House-passed legislation funding the Homeland Security Department through September, the end of the budget year, while also rolling back Obama's executive policies on immigration.

As a result, Congress appears to be at a stalemate on the issue, leaving Republicans with only a few options: Pass a short-term extension of current funding levels, fail and strip the immigration language opposed by Democrats from the bill, or let the Homeland Security Department run out of money when current funding expires Feb. 27.

They're all bad options, from the GOP perspective. A short-term extension just pushes the problem to a later date. Removing the immigration language would amount to a bitter admission of defeat after Republicans have spent months accusing Obama of an unconstitutional power grab for limiting deportations for millions in the U.S. illegally and making them eligible for work permits. That's left Republicans staring down the third possibility: a shutdown of the Homeland Security Department.



TIMOTHY J. GONZALEZ/AP

Oregon Secretary of State Kate Brown speaks Friday outside her office at the Oregon Capitol in Salem. Brown will take over as governor after John Kitzhaber announced his resignation Friday.

Subpoenas arrive after Ore. governor resigns

By JONATHAN J. COOPER

The Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. — Just hours after Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber announced his decision to resign, a subpoena arrived in a state office building confirming that federal agents are looking into the influence-peddling scandal that led to the abrupt end of a four-decade political career.

The Democratic governor gave in to mounting pressure Friday, abandoning his office amid suspicions that his live-in fiancée used her relationship with him to land contracts for her green-energy consulting business.

His resignation, which takes effect Wednesday, cleared the way for Secretary of State Kate Brown to assume Oregon's highest office and to become the nation's first openly bisexual governor.

"This is a sad day for Oregon. But I am confident that legislators are ready to come together to move Oregon forward," said Brown, also a Democrat. Unlike most states, Oregon does not have a lieutenant governor. The secretary of state is next in line to succeed the governor.

When Kitzhaber closes the door on his life in public office, the scandal that toppled Oregon's longest-serving governor will still linger. Subpoenas delivered to the Department of Administrative Services Friday request a massive array of documents from Kitzhaber's administration.

The subpoena was the first acknowledgment of a federal investigation against Kitzhaber, 67, and his fiancée, Cylvia Hayes, 47. It seeks records pertaining to 15 other people besides Kitzhaber and Hayes, including Kitzhaber's chief of staff, policy advisers, Kitzhaber's lawyer and secretaries.

The subpoena orders the agency to produce documents for a federal grand jury before March 10. An agency spokesman, Matt Shelby, said it would provide whatever requested records are in its possession.

Kitzhaber insisted he broke no laws. "Nonetheless, I understand that I have become a liability to the very institutions and policies to which I have dedicated my career and, indeed, my entire adult life," he said in a statement.

The announcement of the planned resignation capped a wild week in which Kitzhaber seemed



DON RYAN/AP

Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber, middle, is joined by his fiancée, Cylvia Hayes, as he is sworn in Jan. 12 for an unprecedented fourth term in Salem, Ore.

poised to step down, then changed his mind, but ultimately bowed to calls from legislative leaders that he quit.

It's a stunning fall from grace for a politician who left the governor's office in 2003 and then mounted a comeback in 2010 and returned to his old job.

In a long statement announcing his decision, a defiant Kitzhaber cast blame on the media and on "so many of my former allies" who did not stick up for him. His staff released an audio recording of him reading the statement. Near the end, his voice trembled and he seemed to choke back tears.

Kitzhaber handily won re-election in November to a fourth term after surviving the botched rollout of Oregon's online health care exchange.

But the allegations surrounding the work of his fiancée were more damaging, dominating headlines in the state following his victory.

A series of newspaper reports since October have chronicled Hayes' work for organizations with an interest in Oregon public policy. At the same time, she was paid by advocacy groups and played an active role in Kitzhaber's administration, a potential conflict of interest.

The spotlight on Hayes led her to reveal that she accepted about \$5,000 to illegally marry a man seeking immigration benefits in the 1990s. Later, she admitted she bought a remote property with the intent to grow marijuana.

NATION

Competency is key to outcome of sniper trial

By JAMIE STENGLE
AND EMILY SCHMALL
The Associated Press

STEPHENVILLE, Texas — While defense attorneys mount an insanity defense for the former Marine on trial in the shooting deaths of "American Sniper" author Chris Kyle and his friend Chad Littlefield, prosecutors have described Eddie Ray Routh as a troubled drug user who knew right from wrong. Criminal law experts say the case hinges on whether the defense can prove Routh did not know that the killings constituted a crime.

Routh's attorneys have said the 27-year-old, who was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and was taking anti-psychotic medication, was insane when Kyle and Littlefield took him to a shooting range to provide support and camaraderie. Routh, his lawyers say, believed the men planned to kill him.

Because Routh was at a shooting range and both Kyle and Littlefield were armed, "it's an easier case than others for the proposition that he believed they were about to kill him," said George Dix, a criminal law professor at the University of Texas, Austin. Prosecutors said Routh faces life in prison without parole. Even if he's acquitted, Routh would likely remain in custody. The Texas criminal code stipulates that in cases involving violent crimes where defendants are found not guilty by reason of insanity, the court can initiate civil proceedings to have them committed.

The case has drawn intense interest, largely because of the Oscar-nominated film based on Kyle's memoir that details his four tours in Iraq.

Prosecutors did not seek the death penalty "presumably because they thought it wouldn't stick," said Andrea Lyon, a defense attorney and dean of the law school at Valparaiso University.

Though prosecutors appear to have conceded that Routh was mentally ill, they will argue that he was competent enough to make choices, Lyon said.

"The question is: Is he legally responsible?" she said.

Erath County District Attorney Alan Nash said during the trial's opening statements that the evidence would show that mental illnesses "don't deprive people of the ability to be good citizens, to know right from wrong, to obey the law."

A Texas Ranger testified Friday that authorities found marijuana, a near-empty bottle of whiskey and anti-psychotic medication while searching Routh's small,

wood-framed home in Lancaster after the shooting. Routh's uncle testified that he'd smoked marijuana with Routh the morning of the shootings.

Prosecutors may try to show that Routh deliberately put himself in a more violent state, said Park Dietz, a forensic psychiatrist who examined acquitted killer Andrea Yates.

"Voluntarily induced intoxication is not an excuse for the mentally ill," he said.

Former Erath County sheriff's deputy Gene Cole testified Friday that after Routh was jailed, he heard him say: "I shot them because they wouldn't talk to me." He said Routh said he had been riding in the back seat on the way to the shooting range. Cole, who is now a police officer elsewhere, said Routh also said, "I feel bad about it, but they wouldn't talk to me. I'm sure they've forgiven me."

Routh's mother had asked Kyle, a former Navy SEAL whose war-time exploits were depicted in his 2012 memoir, to help her son overcome troubles that had at least twice led him to be admitted to a psychiatric hospital. Routh had been a small-arm technician who served in Iraq and was deployed to earthquake-ravaged Haiti before leaving the Marines in 2010.

Prosecutors presented a video Thursday showing officers speaking with Routh as he sat in the pickup that authorities said he took from Kyle after fleeing the shooting range where Kyle and Littlefield were killed. Routh refused to leave the vehicle and eventually sped off with police in pursuit.

The video shows that a police vehicle rammed the pickup. Eventually the car became disabled along the side of the road.

The video showed officers trying to talk Routh into surrendering as he makes comments such as, "Anarchy has been killing the world," "I don't know if I'm going insane," and, "Is this about hell walking on earth right now?"

Lancaster police Lt. Michael Smith said Routh told him he'd taken a couple of souls and he had more souls to take."

Authorities say Routh had earlier driven to his sister's house, admitted to the killings and told his sister, "People were sucking his soul."

After presenting the video Thursday, prosecutor Jane Starnes said: "I think we can agree he makes some kind of odd statements."

Defense attorneys have noted that even Kyle had described Routh as "straight-up nuts" in a text message to Littlefield shortly before they were killed.



TIM JEAN, THE (NORTH ANDOVER, MASS.) EAGLE TRIBUNE/AP

Bob Lamirande uses a roof rake to remove snow off of his home Tuesday in Salem, N.H. The National Weather Service issued a blizzard warning for all of eastern Massachusetts and coastal areas of Maine and New Hampshire ahead of a storm expected to intensify Saturday night and last into Sunday.

There's no love in New England as Valentine's Day storm moves in

The Associated Press

BOSTON — Mother Nature isn't showing New England any love.

Yet another winter storm was due to arrive in the region for Valentine's Day, promising snow and heavy winds even as some areas are already staggering under 6 feet of snow or more.

A blizzard warning was in effect for coastal areas from Connecticut to Maine starting Saturday afternoon for the fourth major storm the region has seen in less than a month. The storm was expected to arrive Saturday afternoon and intensify overnight into Sunday, bringing bone-chilling cold behind it.

Wind gusts could howl at 70 mph and north-facing coastal areas could suffer moderate flooding and beach erosion from the "monster storm," said Bill Simpson, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service in Taunton, Mass.

"Snow amounts will not be as much as the previous big storms, but still, when you have 8 to 14 inches of snow, wind driven-snow, the cold air and the snow that is already there it's probably going to be

very difficult for a lot of people," he said.

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority announced late Friday it would suspend all rail, bus and ferry service in the Boston area on Sunday, the latest in a series of disruptions for the nation's oldest public transit network.

The Coast Guard had an airplane flying in the Gulf of Maine Friday broadcasting a warning to mariners about the impending storm, said Lt. Scott McCann.

Back on land, crews worked urgently to remove the massive snow piles that have clogged streets and triggered numerous roof collapses.

Massachusetts called up hundreds of National Guard troops to assist with snow removal, and the Hanscom Air Force base outside Boston became a staging area for heavy equipment pouring in from eight other Northeast states to help in the effort.

With the weather promising to show little love on Valentine's Day, Baker on Friday proclaimed "Valentine's Week" in Massachusetts and encouraged people to celebrate the holiday by buying gifts and dining out all next week after the storm.

Experts say hate crimes are tough to prove

The Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Relatives of the three Muslim college students killed in North Carolina are pressing for hate-crime charges against the alleged shooter, but legal experts say such cases are relatively rare and can be difficult to prove.

Police in Chapel Hill say they have yet to find any evidence that Craig Stephen Hicks acted out of religious animus, though they are investigating the possibility. As a potential motive, they cited a long-time dispute over parking spaces at the condo community where Hicks and the victims lived.

Hicks, 46, is charged with three counts of first-degree murder in the deaths of Deah Shaddy Barakat, 23; his wife, Yusor Mohammad Abu-Salha, 21; and her sister, Razan Mohammad Abu-Salha, 19.

The FBI is now conducting a "parallel preliminary inquiry" to determine whether any federal laws, including hate-crime laws, were violated.

Search warrants filed in a court Friday showed Hicks listed a dozen firearms taken from his condo unit. The warrants list four handguns recovered from the home where he lived with his wife, in addition to a pistol the suspect had with him when he turned himself in after the shootings. Warrants also listed two shotguns and six rifles, including a military-style AR-15 carbine, and a large cache of ammunition.

The case spurred international outrage.

A news release Saturday from the 57-nation Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the world's largest bloc of Muslim countries, says the group's leader thanks the

American people for "rejecting the murder which bears the symptoms of a hate crime."

Secretary General Lyad Madani also said the murders heightened international concerns about "rising anti-Muslim sentiments and Islamophobic acts" in the United States.

Family members say all three were shot in the head, though police aren't saying exactly how the victims died.

To win a hate-crime conviction, legal experts say prosecutors would have to prove Hicks deliberately targeted the victims because of their religion, race or national origin.

North Carolina does not have a specific "hate crime" statute, though its laws cover such acts of "ethnic intimidation" as hanging a noose, burning a cross or setting fire to a church.

NATION

Stand against gay marriage falls apart in Ala.

By KIM CHANDLER
The Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Alabama's stand against gay marriage crumbled Friday as judges in most counties sided with federal courts rather than their own chief justice, a Republican who once called homosexuality an inherent evil.

Many counties in the Bible Belt state began issuing the licenses to same-sex couples after the latest strongly worded order from U.S. District Judge Callie Granade. She said Thursday that a judge could no longer deny marriage licenses to gays and lesbians, reiterating her ruling striking down the state's ban on same-sex marriage.

"These numbers represent a seismic shift in favor of equality and justice. Resistance to happy, loving and committed same-sex couples getting married is quickly crumbling throughout the state," said Fred Sainz, a top spokesman for the Human Rights Campaign, which has been lobbying to expand gay rights nationwide.

Granade's ruling enabling gays to get licenses went into effect Monday after the U.S. Supreme Court declined to intervene. But even Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore said county judges were not bound by her decision.

About 20 of Alabama's 67 counties allowed gays and lesbians to wed on Monday. By Friday that number had jumped to at least 47, the Human Rights Campaign said. Other counties said they would revisit the decision this week.

Granade's ruling made Alabama the 37th state where gays and lesbians can legally wed. It also continued her family legacy of bringing sweeping change to a place where many people didn't yet welcome it.

Her grandfather was Richard Rives, a federal appellate judge whose rulings helped desegregate the South despite resistance to the Civil Rights movement in

'Resistance to happy, loving and committed same-sex couples getting married is quickly crumbling throughout the state.'

Fred Sainz
Human Rights Campaign

the 1950s and 1960s.

While many Republican politicians in Alabama criticized her ruling last month and tried to link her to Obama administration policies, Granade was appointed to the federal bench by President George W. Bush.

Granade could have stayed her decision pending a final U.S. Supreme Court ruling. Instead, she rejected Alabama's argument that keeping gays and lesbians from marrying benefits the state's children. And after Moore urged judges last week to ignore her ruling, she reiterated that they are bound by the U.S. Constitution to treat all couples equally.

Lee County's probate judge, Bill English, said Friday that Granade's order "makes it clear" he had to open his courthouse doors.

Moore's stand against federal authority surprised no one in Alabama, where the 68-year-old jurist who twice ran for governor burnished his conservative image a decade ago with a losing fight to keep his Ten Commandments statue inside the Alabama Judicial Building.

While Moore again appeared on the losing side Friday, a longtime supporter said the 81 percent of Alabama voters who chose to ban gay marriage in 2006 would appreciate his stand.

"I think this lady judge is scaring the daylight out of these people," Orange Beach businessman Dean Young said. "The people are very thankful that Judge Moore is standing up."



JACKIE SKAGGS, GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK/AP

An unusual cloud formation across the summit of the Grand Teton is seen in this view from the park's headquarters campus at Moose, Wyo.

Clouds enchant park visitors

By MEAD GRUVER
The Associated Press

CHEYENNE, Wyo. — A bizarre sheet of wispy clouds undulating over the Teton Range enchanted tourists and even veteran employees of Grand Teton National Park.

Drivers stopped along the park's main highway Thursday morning to gaze in awe and shoot photos of the rare phenomenon hovering over Grand Teton mountain. At 13,770 feet above sea level, the Grand Teton is the highest point in the Teton Range.

The shape-shifting clouds at times appeared like a billowing handkerchief or seagull with its beak touching the mountain's summit, park spokeswoman Jackie Skaggs said.

She first spotted them on her morning drive to work. "I had to make myself pay attention to the road because I was like, 'Wow, that is really strange,'" Skaggs said Friday.

The clouds persisted through the morning before finally dissipating in the afternoon.

They were lenticular clouds,

a type that forms downwind of mountain ranges in certain conditions. Occasionally, lenticular clouds occur as perfectly symmetrical disks, appearing like giant flying saucers and prompting UFO reports.

These particular lenticular clouds resulted from an unusual combination of strong wind and moisture between 13,000 and 14,000 feet, said Riverton-based National Weather Service meteorologist Chris Jones, who got word of the event from several weather spotters.

Postal service fixes electronic glitch

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Postal Service says it's fixed the electronic glitch that had disrupted some services — and that everything is back to normal.

Spokesman David Partenheimer said in an email that the agency's communication network was restored Friday night.

"Postal Service back up," he says.

A network outage had affected some postal functions from late

Thursday through Friday, including package handling at some local post offices. The problem brought down the agency's email system across the country.

The Postal Service says the trouble resulted from a hardware installation Thursday.

The outage did not affect the acceptance of mail, or mail processing or delivery.

Agency spokeswoman Toni DeLancey said the outage first occurred Thursday afternoon.

"It has nothing to do with any

kind of cyber intrusion or anything like that. It's just a technical problem while hardware was being installed," she said.

Another postal spokesman, David Partenheimer, later said the problem continued into Friday evening. "Hardware installation caused the problem. It does take time to get all systems back on line. They have to come back on line in a certain order. So we apologize to our customers who had any problems."

Obama calls on private sector to help curb cyberattacks

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE
AND MARTHA MENDOZA
The Associated Press

PALO ALTO, Calif. — Cyber-space is the new "Wild West," President Barack Obama said Friday, with everyone looking to the government to be the sheriff. But he told the private sector it must do more to stop cyberattacks aimed at the U.S. every day.

"Everybody is online, and everybody is vulnerable," Obama said during a White House cybersecurity summit at Stanford University, just miles from Google, Facebook, Intel and other Internet giants.

"The business leaders here want their privacy and their children protected, just like the consumer and privacy advocates here want America to keep lead-

ing the world in technology and be safe from attacks," he said.

Partnering with the federal government is a hard sell in the Silicon Valley. The pace of innovation in California's tech hub outstrips Beltway bureaucracy, and tech firms chafe at regulations that could limit their reach.

Further, disclosures from former intelligence contractor Edward Snowden exposing

sweeping U.S. government surveillance programs have angered many. The programs tapped into data from firms including Google and Yahoo.

Obama told more than 1,500 business leaders, students, professors and reporters that information about threats must be shared and responded to quickly. And he signed an executive order aimed at making it easier for private

firms to have access to classified information about cyberattacks.

He also stressed there would be oversight to ensure protections for privacy and civil liberties.

The administration wants Congress to replace the existing patchwork of state laws with a national standard giving companies 30 days to notify consumers if their personal information has been compromised.

WORLD



PETR DAVID JOSEK/AP

A Ukrainian military convoy stops on the road between the towns of Dabeltseve and Artemivsk, Ukraine, on Saturday. The fighting between Russia-backed separatists and Ukrainian government forces has continued despite the agreement reached by leaders of Russia, Ukraine, Germany and France in the Belarusian capital of Minsk on Thursday.

Ukraine fighting persists ahead of cease-fire

BY BALINT SZLANKO
The Associated Press

SVITLODARSK, Ukraine — Heavy artillery fire roared Saturday in eastern Ukraine as fighting between Ukrainian forces and Russia-backed separatists continued hours before a cease-fire was to take effect in the conflict that has killed more than 5,300 people.

Associated Press reporters saw the artillery barrage near the town of Svitlodarsk as well as considerable movement of Ukrainian

forces' armored vehicles and rocket launchers along the road.

Svitlodarsk is about 12 miles north of Debaltseve, a strategically important railroad junction city where Ukrainian forces have been under siege by rebels. Eduard Basurin, a rebel spokesman, was quoted by the RIA Novosti news agency as saying that the fighters would not allow the Ukrainian forces to escape the city but would be offered the opportunity to surrender.

Under an agreement reached Thursday, the warring sides are

to cease firing at midnight (2200 GMT). However, a previous cease-fire called in September failed to take hold and after fighting escalated sharply in January, expectations for the new agreement are clouded.

Officials in the port city of Mariupol meanwhile said an array of artillery attacks hit areas near the city during the morning. There was no immediate information on casualties.

Mariupol is on the Azov Sea and concerns are strong that Russian-backed separatists aim to seize it

as a step toward establishing a corridor between mainland Russia and the Crimean Peninsula that Russia annexed 11 months ago.

Also Saturday, the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, Geoffrey Pyatt, posted on Twitter what he said were satellite photos showing Russian artillery systems near the town of Lomuvatka, about 12 miles northeast of Debaltseve. The images could not immediately be verified.

Russia has flatly denied repeated Western claims that it has

sent troops and equipment to the eastern Ukraine rebels.

The fighting started in April after armed separatists took control of towns and official buildings in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of eastern Ukraine. The seizures began after Russia-friendly president Viktor Yanukovych was driven from power in the wake of months of protests in the capital, Kiev. The separatists claim the new Ukrainian authorities are fascist-inspired and aim to suppress the heavily ethnic Russian population in the east.

NATO expansion is at heart of Ukraine crisis

BY STEVEN R. HURST
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Cold War didn't end. It just took on a 24-year pause. The East-West showdown over Ukraine makes that clear.

As the non-Russian republics broke free in the Soviet collapse and Eastern European Soviet satellite countries snapped the chains of Moscow's dominion, common wisdom held the Cold War was over. The victors: The United States and its European allies

ANALYSIS

— bound together in the NATO alliance to block further Soviet expansion in Europe after World War II.

Since the Soviet collapse — as Moscow had feared — that alliance has spread eastward, expanding along a line from Estonia in the north to Romania and Bulgaria in the south. The Kremlin claims it had Western assurances that would not happen. Now, Moscow's only buffers to a complete NATO encirclement on its western border are Finland, Belarus and Ukraine.

The Kremlin would not have to be paranoid to look at that map with concern. And Russia reacted dramatically early last year. U.S.-Russian relations have fallen back into the dangerous nuclear and political standoff of the Cold War years before the Soviet collapse.

The turmoil began when Ukraine's corrupt, Russia-friendly President Viktor Yanukovych backed out of an agreement with the European Union for closer trade and



PETR DAVID JOSEK/AP

A Ukrainian government soldier speaks on the phone while guarding a checkpoint on the road between the towns of Dabeltseve and Artemivsk, Ukraine, on Saturday.

political ties and instead accepted Russian guarantees of billions of dollars in financial aid. That led to prolonged pro-Western demonstrations in the Ukrainian capital, Kiev. The upheaval caused Yanukovych to flee to Moscow a year ago.

When a new, pro-Western government

took power in Ukraine, Russia reacted by seizing the Crimean Peninsula and making it once again a part of Russia. Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev had transferred the strategic region from Russian federation control to the Ukraine republic in 1954. Crimea remained base to Russia's Black Sea fleet. Ethnic Russians are a majority of the population.

Also, Russian-speaking separatists in eastern Ukraine — along the Russian border — began agitating, then fighting to break free of Kiev's control, variously demanding autonomy, independence or to become a part of Russia. As separatist fighters — the West claims they have been given Russian heavy arms and are backed by Russian forces — pushed deeper into Ukraine, a September peace conference drew up plans for a cease-fire and eventual steps toward a political resolution.

The cease-fire never held, and the fighting between Ukrainian forces and the separatist grew more intense. The separatists accumulated considerable ground in the fighting, which the United Nations reports has claimed 5,300 lives.

Now there's a new peace plan. Hammered out in all-night negotiations last week, it calls for a cease-fire to take effect Sunday. But since the deal was announced, fighting has only increased, as Ukrainian forces battle to hold a major rail hub in Debaltseve. The town controls transport between the rebel-held regions of Donetsk and Luhansk. Those regions are home to major heavy industrial complexes, many of which produce weapons for Russia's

military.

As part of the deal that calls for an end to fighting, both sides are to draw back heavy weapons from the conflict line. Kiev is to write a new constitution that would reflect the autonomy demands of the separatists. Ukraine would retake control of its border with Russia. Moscow views the accord as a guarantee Ukraine will not join NATO.

The agreement was heralded as a new chance for peace by French President Francois Hollande and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who arranged the deal at negotiations that also involved Ukraine President Petro Poroshenko and Russian President Vladimir Putin. Rebel leaders also signed on. U.S. President Barack Obama's administration, which has led a tough sanctions drive against Moscow over its actions in Crimea and eastern Ukraine, has taken a wait-and-see attitude.

American officials are skeptical the deal will hold. Secretary of State John Kerry put it bluntly: "Actions will be what matter now. We will judge the commitment of Russia and the separatists by their actions, not their words."

In the meantime, the administration has put off a decision on sending lethal weapons to Ukraine and imposing additional sanctions on Russia. Putin, who so far has proven impervious to Western sanctions and crashing oil prices that threaten the entire Russian economy — is a step closer to his goal of making certain there won't be yet another NATO member along the country's western frontier.

WORLD

Boko Haram assault repelled in Nigeria

By HARUNA UMAR
The Associated Press

BAUCHI, Nigeria — Nigeria's military Saturday repelled an attack on a northeastern town by Boko Haram Islamic extremists who, as they retreated, warned residents not to participate in the country's elections in March.

Two air force jets joined soldiers in attacking the rebels after they assaulted Gombe in the morning.

The Boko Haram fighters left in a convoy of vehicles carrying dozens of corpses, according to residents.

"They were heard telling our people in the villages leading to Gombe that they have not come to harm civilians but the security agents. They were also dropping copies of papers with messages written in Hausa warning people not to participate in the coming elections, lest they risk being killed," said resident Malam Hassan.

The Associated Press obtained a copy of the message in which Boko Haram warned that its fighters will attack all polling stations in the March 28 elections. The Boko Haram paper also said residents should not assist the army and pledged not to attack those who stayed out of its fight against the

government.

"We are calling on you all to come and join us in the Jihad and embrace Islamic Sharia jurisprudence," said the papers dropped by Boko Haram.

The fiercest fighting was about three kilometers (two miles) outside the town, resident Jummai Aliyu said.

Gombe has previously been attacked multiple times, including by a car bomb in December that killed at least 20 people.

Boko Haram's Islamic extremist insurgency killed 10,000 people last year compared to 2,000 in the four previous years, according to the U.S. Council on For-

eign Relations. Fighting has forced some 157,000 people to seek refuge in Niger, while 40,000 others have gone to Cameroon and 17,000 are in Chad, according to the United Nations.

On Friday, the group staged its first attack on Chadian territory, bringing to three the number of neighboring countries roped into what had previously been an internal Nigerian conflict. The targeted village, Ngouboua, was already home to nearly 3,300 refugees who had fled Boko Haram-related violence in Nigeria, according to the U.N.



GINA CAYLOR, U.S. COAST GUARD/AP

Antarctic rescue

A crewmember of the Coast Guard icebreaker *Polar Star* watches through a window Friday as the ship begins breaking up the ice around the fishing vessel *Antarctic Chieftain*. Rescuers on Saturday reached the boat, which had been trapped for three days in ice near Antarctica with 26 people aboard. The Coast Guard used an unmanned sub to determine that the fishing boat's propellers were damaged and it would need to be towed to port.

Several shot at Danish free speech event

The Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — A gunman fired on a cafe in Copenhagen as it hosted a free speech event Saturday, killing one man, Danish police said. The event was organized by Swedish artist Lars Vilks, who has faced numerous threats after caricaturing the Prophet Muhammad.

Danish police said the gunman shot through the windows of the Krudttoenden cafe, which the TV2 news channel said were riddled with some 30 bullet holes. Police spokesman Henrik Blandenberg said three police colleagues at the event were wounded.

Helle Merete Brix, one of the event's organizers, told The Associated Press that Vilks was at the meeting but was not hit.

"I saw a masked man running past," Brix said. "I clearly consider this as an attack on Lars Vilks."

There was no immediate claim of responsibility.

The attack came a month after Islamic militants attacked another media outlet that had printed Muhammad cartoons, the *Charlie Hebdo* satirical magazine in Paris, killing 12 people. Vilks told The Associated Press after the Paris terror attacks that, due

to increased security concerns, even fewer organizations were inviting him to give lectures.

"I heard someone firing with an automatic weapons and someone shouting. Police returned the fire and I hid behind the bar. I felt surreal, like in a movie," Niels Ivar Larsen, one of the speakers at the event, told the TV2 channel.

Brix said she was ushered away with Vilks by one of the Danish police guards that he gets whenever he is in Denmark.

In a statement, Danish police said the victim was a 40-year-old man inside the cafe. He has not yet been identified.

Official: At least 16 die in bus-train crash in Mexico

By PORFIRIO IBARRA
The Associated Press

MONTERREY, Mexico — A passenger bus and a freight train collided at a grade crossing in northern Mexico, killing at least 16 people and injuring 22, a Mexican official said.

The official said the accident occurred Friday in the town of Anahuac, which is Tamaulipas state near the border city of Nuevo Laredo, across from Laredo, Texas. The official was not authorized to be quoted by name.

The train's operator, Kansas City Southern of Mexico, issued

a statement confirming there had been "a lamentable accident" between one of its trains and a passenger bus about 5:25 p.m. The company said its employees reported "an undetermined number of dead and injured at the scene."

Kansas City Southern did not give a cause for the crash. The Mexican official said investigators were looking into whether the bus driver tried to beat the train to the crossing.

The train was operated by the Transporte Frontera line on a route from Nuevo Laredo to the neighboring state of Coahuila.



AP Television

Emergency responders work at the scene of a collision between a bus and a freight train Friday at a grade crossing in northern Mexico in the town of Anahuac, near the border city of Nuevo Laredo, across from Laredo, Texas.

Canada police foil plot to kill people at mall

TORONTO — Canadian police foiled a plot by two suspects who were planning to go to a mall to kill as many people as they could before committing suicide on Valentine's Day in Halifax, a senior police official said.

The official told The Associated Press on Saturday that police acted quickly after receiving information from the public on the Crime Stoppers tip line.

The official spoke anonymously because he was not authorized to

speak publicly.

A 19-year-old male suspect shot himself to death after police surrounded his home, the official said. A 23-year-old woman from Geneva, Ill., was arrested at Halifax airport and confessed to the plot, the official said, adding that she had prepared a number of pronouncements to be tweeted after her death.

The official said the suspects used a chat stream and were apparently obsessed with death and had many photos of mass killings.

From The Associated Press

OPINION

Pence campaign has built-in governor

BY GEORGE F. WILL

Although he is always preternaturally placid, Mike Pence today exemplifies a Republican conundrum. Sitting recently 24 blocks from Capitol Hill, where he served six terms as a congressman, and eight blocks from the White House, which some Republicans hope he craves, Pence, now in his third year as Indiana's governor, discussed two issues, Common Core and Medicaid expansion, that illustrate the following:

Today's president, whose prior governmental experience was meager and entirely legislative, probably has strengthened voters' normal preference for actual executives — governors rather than legislators — as chief executives. Governors actually govern, which means continually making choices and compromises. So, with the Republican nominating electorate increasingly persnickety about ideological purity, governors often are more disadvantaged than executive candidates.

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Stars and Stripes (USPS 0417900) is published weekdays (except Dec. 25 and Jan. 1) for 50 cents Monday through Thursday and for \$1 on Friday by Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AP 96338-5002. Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, CA, Postmaster: Send address changes to Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AP 96338-5002.

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MICHAEL CONBOY/A

Indiana Gov. Mike Pence pauses while speaking in Indianapolis last month.

micromanagement of K-12 education. If Hoosiers want different standards, Pence says, they now are forever free to write them.

In 2003, Pence was one of just 19 Republicans to defy the Bush administration's excruciating pressure to vote for the Medicare Part D, the unfunded prescription drug entitlement. So, having demonstrated, as with No Child Left Behind, his conservative credentials, he deserved conservatives' trust when he responded to Obamacare's push for expansion of traditional Medicaid by negotiating from the Obama administration remarkable concessions that are a template for nationwide Medicaid reform.

The administration reluctantly conceded what Pence calls "the foundation of consumer-driven health care," the requirement that people make a financial contribution (in Indiana, to a Health Savings Account) and that there be consequences — they are locked out of the system for six months — if they do not.

Conservatives who despise any transaction with Barack Obama dismiss Pence's achievement. But Pence's plan is warmly endorsed by Grace-Marie Turner, a leading advocate of replacing Obamacare with consumer-directed health care reform. She says conservatives should applaud

Pence for making Medicaid more like a Health Savings Account, under which purchasers of high-deductible insurance use HSA tax-preferred savings to pay for routine medical expenses.

Americans sometimes vote for a president who is the opposite of the one who has just preceded him and has disappointed them. Hence the Republicans' nominee should be confident and astute enough to approach the presidency by promising the reverse of an Army recruiting slogan, "Be all you can be." Pence understands the need for a president promising to be less than he can be. Less, that is, like Obama, who has advertised his disdain for the legislative branch by pushing past the proper limits of unilateral executive action.

In 2010, before Obama's institutional vandalism against the separation of powers had confronted the country with the most lawless presidency since Richard Nixon's, Pence delivered an address in which he said, "The president is not our teacher, our tutor, our guide or ruler." There is a presidential "duty of self-restraint" because "a president who slights the Constitution is like a rider who hates his horse: he will be thrown, and the nation along with him."

It is Pence's political misfortune, though a pleasant one, that his predecessor, Mitch Daniels, left Indiana on a rising trajectory, needing neither a savior nor radical surgery. Still, under Pence individual and corporate income taxes have been cut, the inheritance tax has been abolished, and the nation's largest school-choice program may be expanded.

With many Indiana preoccupations, Pence says he will not decide about a presidential campaign until May. This would be perilously late in the scramble for major donors and seasoned staff. Again, the paradox: Governors' jobs can qualify them for the presidency by requiring them to spend much time and political capital in transactions that can make a nomination difficult to attain.

George F. Will is a member of Washington Post Writers Group.

'16 likely older Democrat vs. younger Republican

BY CARL P. LEUBSDORF
The Dallas Morning News

Americans always like something new. A recent focus group session with a cross section of Colorado voters showed how that might affect the unfolding 2016 presidential campaign.

Participants in the nonpartisan focus group conducted by veteran Democratic Party pollster Peter Hart showed disdain for the older, more established 2016 hopefuls (think Hillary Rodham Clinton and Jeb Bush) and positive curiosity about two newer faces (think Elizabeth Warren and Rand Paul).

About the same time, 2012 Republican nominee Mitt Romney echoed those sentiments in announcing he would not run again, saying he believed "one of our next generation of Republican leaders ... may well emerge as being better able to defeat the Democratic nominee."

Overall, they suggest a potential Republican advantage, thanks to a large field of newer faces. And it should be a warning to Democrats, who are not only poised to nominate Clinton but also have a far smaller bench of future leaders.

This is the political fallout from the sweeping Republican 2010 and 2014 victories, which produced a new generation of GOP officeholders and prevented a similar

group of Democrats from emerging.

The GOP field includes four potential contenders in their 40s — Govs. Scott Walker, of Wisconsin, and Bobby Jindal, of Louisiana, and Sens. Ted Cruz, of Texas, and Marco Rubio, of Florida. Four others are in their 50s — Govs. Chris Christie, of New Jersey, and Mike Pence, of Indiana, and Sens. Paul, of Kentucky, and Lindsey Graham, of South Carolina. Former Govs. Bush, of Florida, Mike Huckabee, of Arkansas and Rick Perry, of Texas, and Dr. Ben Carson are in their 60s.

By contrast, of the six most-mentioned Democrats, only Warren, 65, and former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley, 52, are younger than Clinton, 67. Vice President Joe Biden, Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders and former Virginia Sen. Jim Webb are all older.

The GOP also has a broad array of up-and-coming prospects. Sen. Kelly Ayotte, of New Hampshire, and newly elected Sens. Cory Gardner, of Colorado, and Joni Ernst of Iowa, are all in their 40s.

A corresponding Democratic list is far smaller. It includes Texas' 40-year-old Castro twins — Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Julian Castro, the former mayor of San Antonio, and Rep. Joaquin Castro. But neither has won statewide office. The number of fellow Democratic 40-somethings who have won is small, led by Sens. Cory Booker, of New Jersey, 45; and Kirsten Gillibrand, of New York, 48. Prospects in their 50s include Sens. Tim

Kaine, of Virginia, and Amy Klobuchar, of Minnesota, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo and California Attorney General Kamala Harris, a favorite to win a U.S. Senate seat in 2016. Sens. Claire McCaskill, of Missouri, and Mark Warner, of Virginia, are in their early 60s.

It's easy to see Clinton tapping one of these as her running mate — perhaps Kaine. He's from a crucial swing state, was Richmond's mayor and Virginia's governor, and is an emerging leader in Senate debates on authorizing military action abroad.

But Romney's withdrawal virtually ensures a race pitting an older Democrat against a younger Republican. The question is how much younger. Bush is 5½ years younger than Clinton, while Walker is 20 years younger.

History sends a mixed message. In four of the last six elections, Democrats Barack Obama and Bill Clinton defeated significantly older Republican rivals. But in the 1980s, two older Republicans, Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush, beat younger Democrats.

On NBC's "Meet the Press," Chuck Todd noted that, on average, presidents elected in the past century were 7.6 years younger than their predecessors. In 2016, the issue may be whether youth again carries the day or Obama's presidency spurs voters to elect someone older and more experienced.

Carl P. Leubsdorf is the former Washington bureau chief of The Dallas Morning News.

OPINION

Foreigners: Islamic State's cannon fodder

By ELI LAKE

Aspiring jihadis looking to join the Islamic State army are often lured to the front lines with promises of changing the course of history and reclaiming a lost Islamic empire.

But at least for the less-skilled foreign recruits, the experience of fighting for the new caliphate is often brief and bloody. Kurdish and Iraqi commanders on the front lines of the war whom I interviewed in the past two weeks say that the suicide bombers and first-wave attackers deployed in Islamic State offensives are almost entirely made up of units of foreign fighters. These highly risky missions mean that the new "immigrants" fighting the infidels end up as cannon fodder, while the more prestigious organizational jobs and less-risky defensive assignments go to Syrian and Iraqi Arabs.

"The ones actively fighting in the first wave of the attacks, they are mostly using central Asian members," said Masrour Barzani, chancellor of the Kurdistan Region Security Council, who oversees much of the day-to-day fighting against the Islamic State. "Local Arab forces are used to shore up defensive positions."

Gen. Ali al-Wazir Shamary of the Iraqi army said he had a similar experience in his battles against Islamic State forces in Diyala province. "We often see the foreign fighters in the first wave of attacks and then the Arab fighters will come in after an area is cleared," he said.

Some of this has already been described in social media. A Twitter account known as @wikibaghda, thought to be a whistle-blower with knowledge of the Islamic State's internal operations, said in a series of tweets last summer that foreign volunteers would primarily be used for martyrdom operations.

This information on the order of battle is important, because U.S. intelligence agencies for nearly two years have worried that Western passport-holders who travel to Syria and now Iraq to fight with the Islamic State and al-Qaida's affiliates could return to their home countries, battle-hardened and undetected.



AP

Fighters shoot a machine gun toward the Islamic State group on the outskirts of Kobani, Syria, in November. Kurdish and Iraqi commanders fighting Islamic State militants say first-wave attackers often are foreign fighters, meaning they usually are the first to die. The less-risky jobs go to Syrian and Iraqi Arabs.

Thomas Joscelyn, a senior fellow and counterterrorism expert at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, told me that while it's true many of the Islamic State volunteers won't survive, those that do will pose a particular threat down the line.

"The overwhelming majority of foreign fighters will not return home to commit terrorist attacks," Joscelyn said. "But some of them will. The real risk is that as the number of foreign fighters increases, the talent pool from which terrorist organizations can draw deepens. This increases the chance that terrorist groups will find highly skilled, intelligent and committed fighters who can be repurposed for plots in their home countries."

The process for recruiting foreign volunteers is very structured. Hisham al-Hashemi, a former Salafist from Iraq who is now a consultant for Iraq's Ministry of Defense and some Western intelligence agencies, told me that Islamic State recruiters will examine whether a recruit has special skills such as computer engineering or whether he is more suited for combat. After the initial vetting, the recruit will be funneled into a specific job.

Al-Hashemi said the process was akin to brainwashing. "They will give them new names and make them swear an oath of allegiance," he said. "For the foreign fighters, they will be sent to a safe house before being deployed as a suicide bomber

or fighter, and they won't even know where they are or anyone else near them."

This recruitment process is detailed and well-documented. Captured records from a 2007 U.S. raid on the town of Sinjar by the Islamic State's predecessor, al-Qaida in Iraq, show that the group kept precise documentation on their foreign volunteers. Back then, most of the foreign fighters were fellow Arabs from Libya, Saudi Arabia and Syria. There was also concern that enlisting too many foreign fighters would detract from the group's efforts to appeal to local Iraqis.

Today that pool of foreign fighters has expanded to regions including Europe, North America, Central Asia and even China. Barzani said his peshmerga fighters have encountered Chechens, Uzbeks, Kazakhs and Turks in initial assaults. Al-Shamary told me his troops have fought Uighurs, a Muslim minority group residing in western China.

"Foreigners joining the fight in Syria and Iraq are being deployed to the front lines for a variety of purposes," said Michael Smith of Kronos Advisory, a counterterrorism consulting firm that tracks online propaganda from jihadi groups. One, he said, is to prove that they are not working for a foreign intelligence organization or a rival jihadi group.

But using foreign volunteers in first wave or as suicide bombers is also useful for propaganda. "Sending jihadis from the U.S., Canada, Europe or Chechnya off to meet their maker is much less likely to have the effect of degrading the group's capacity to cultivate goodwill among local populations, which the group wants to govern," Smith said. Also, advertising that recruits from all over the world are willing to die for the caliphate can encourage more volunteers.

It's been working so far. But sooner or later, the pool of potential recruits may notice that the Islamic State's volunteers don't live long enough to enjoy the new Islamic empire.

Eli Lake is a Bloomberg View columnist.

In Iraq, Kirkuk continues to be a question mark

By DAVID IGNATIUS

FROM the roof of his office, Gov. Najmaldin Karim can see this multiethnic city laid out below. He points toward the Sunni suburb of Hawjah about 15 miles west, which is controlled by the Islamic State. Two weeks ago, the extremists staged a ferocious assault there that almost broke through the defense lines.

"ISIS has its eyes on Kirkuk. It is the big prize for them," said Karim, using the term for the enemy that's common here. This very morning, a gray day when poor visibility favored the attackers, ISIS launched an artillery-and-mortar strike in a Sunni suburb called Daquq, south of the city. Coalition airstrikes have pounded ISIS targets here twice this week.

Kirkuk sits uneasily on the fault line between Kurdistan to the east, the Shiite-led Baghdad government to the south, and Sunni regions to the west. Karim is a Kurd, himself, and a member of one of its big political parties, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. But "as governor, I'm governor of everybody," he insists.

Kirkuk illustrates the dilemmas facing

the Kurdish regional government in Irbil, about an hour's drive north. The Kurds regard Kirkuk as part of their ancestral homeland, and the Iraqi constitution calls for a referendum in which the city's Kurdish majority could vote to leave the orbit of Baghdad and to become part of Kurdistan.

But can the Kurds swallow Kirkuk without choking on the other groups that live here? Karim reckons that Kurds make up a little over 50 percent of the Kirkuk population, while Sunnis account for 32 percent to 35 percent and Turkmen have 13 percent to 14 percent. It's a microcosm of the larger Iraqi ethnic puzzle.

For now, the common enemy of ISIS seems to be bringing Iraqis together here. The Kurdish peshmerga rings the city and provides the most important security force. But inside the city, security is managed by a local police force that Karim said is roughly 39 percent Arab, 36 percent Kurd and 26 percent Turkmen. "If they say it's only the Kurds who are keeping order in the city, that's not true," argued Karim.

Karim said he favors a special status for Kirkuk within Kurdistan, like what Quebec has in Canada. But Falah Mustafa Bakir, Kurdistan's minister for foreign affairs, rejects this formula. "We have wait-

ed too long," he said in an interview in his office in Irbil. "We don't want to continue with transition and delay."

Kirkuk is just one of the question marks for a Kurdistan that, in many ways, has been the great Iraqi success story. The region has security, jobs and most of all, the dynamism of a homogenous population where nearly everyone shares the same dream of eventual Kurdish independence.

But Kurdistan also has some mundane problems, starting with corruption. The country is run by traditional political parties dominated by the Barzani and Talabani clans, who have historically controlled the Kurdish Democratic Party and the PUK, respectively. Having the right connections, and greasing them with some cash, has become a way of life here.

It's "absolutely right" that Kurdistan has been weakened by corruption, conceded Masrour Barzani, the chief of the regional security council who oversees all intelligence activities. "We don't claim perfection," agreed Bakir, but he argued that corruption in Kurdistan is far less than the circus of thievery in Baghdad. The ruling KDP government gave a smaller reform party known as "Change" control of the finance ministry and oversight of the pesh-

merga. But when asked if these reforms have removed payoffs and nepotism, a prominent local businessman just rolls his eyes.

Even the Kurds' beloved peshmerga had its troubles in the first days of the war against ISIS last August. "The pesh had been dormant for a long time," explained Barzani. Some inexperienced commanders buckled, and grizzled veterans had to be mobilized. Since August, they've lost more than 1,000 killed in action and over 4,500 wounded. The Kurds still want their own country someday (leaders talk of a confederation within the next decade) but for now they are still Iraqis.

Kurdistan's problems are manageable, if leaders take them seriously. The danger is that corruption and political tension could weaken the foundations of the Kurdish region, just as they have the rest of Iraq. For now, the Kurds maintain the strongest platform in the region — and they've done the best job in battling the ISIS extremists. But nothing lasts forever. Kurdistan must solve the problems of success as well as it did those of centuries of isolation and betrayal.

David Ignatius writes for Washington Post Writers Group.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP



CARRIE ANTLINGER/AP

On a wing and a prayer

A wing skater competes in a race during the World Ice and Snow Sailing Championships on Lake Winnebago in Fond du Lac, Wis. Elite kiteboarders from 11 countries gathered to compete in three disciplines: kites, wings and sails. It's the third time the event has been held in the United States in 35 years. Other countries competing include Russia, Latvia, Sweden and Finland.

Councilman charged with election sign theft

CA LAKE FOREST — A Lake Forest city councilman has been charged with violating a city ordinance against stealing election signs — a law that he toughened last year.

The Orange County district attorney's office said Adam Nick was charged Wednesday with misdemeanor counts of petty theft and receiving stolen property.

Authorities said that last October, Nick arranged to steal about a dozen campaign signs for fellow Councilman Scott Voigts, who was running for a second term. Voigts was re-elected.

Nick also is charged with violating a city ordinance that he amended last year to allow harsher penalties for people who tamper with or remove campaign signs.

He could face a year in jail if convicted.

Jury convicts man who has bodies in his yard

PA WILKES-BARRE — Authorities have wanted to nab Hugo Selenski, 41, on murder charges ever since they searched his northeastern Pennsylvania yard in 2003 and found the bodies of a missing pharmacist, the pharmacist's girlfriend and at least three other sets of human remains.

It took nearly a dozen years and one failed prosecution, but they finally got their man on Wednesday after a jury convicted the career criminal in the strangling deaths of pharmacist Michael Kerkowski and Tammy Fassett.

Selenski, already serving a long prison sentence on unrelated robbery charges, now faces a poten-

THE CENSUS

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The number of rabbits discovered in a Santa Ana, Calif., garage in what police called a hoarding situation. The Orange County Register reported that officers found the rabbits late Tuesday living four or five to a cage in unsanitary conditions. Nine of them were pregnant. Animal services took the rabbits and is offering them for adoption. Police Cpl. Anthony Bertagna said the woman told police she originally adopted just one and didn't realize how quickly the animals would multiply.

tial death sentence after the jury concluded he killed the couple during a 2002 robbery and buried their bodies behind his house. He had little to say as he was led out of the courthouse.

Woman: Late husband saved me from blaze

ME CHINA — A Maine woman credits her late husband with waking her up during a fire that destroyed her home, and as proof she points to one of the few things to survive the blaze — his wedding ring.

Joyce Bragg's home in the town of China was destroyed Feb. 5 by a fire likely started by a wood stove. Bragg, 67, told the Morning Sentinel that she was asleep when she awoke to the smell of smoke and escaped.

Her son-in-law, sorting through the rubble, found a cardboard box containing her diamond ring and her husband's wedding band. Wayne Bragg died in a car crash four years ago.

Bragg said, "I know my husband was there to save me and wake me up. ... Why didn't the rings melt, but everything else did?"

Ex-teacher's kid phobia claim doesn't convince

OH CINCINNATI — A federal appeals court has ruled against a former high school teacher, 63, who sued

school administrators for allegedly discriminating against her because of what she says is a rare phobia that makes her fear young children.

The 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati on Wednesday upheld a lower court decision dismissing Maria Walther-Willard's breach-of-contract claim against Mariemont City Schools in suburban Cincinnati. The lower court ruled in favor of the district on Walther-Willard's other claims, including age and disability discrimination.

The district transferred her from its high school to a middle school in 2009. She said the younger students triggered her phobia. The foreign languages teacher said that raised her blood pressure and forced her to retire.

Man urinates on grave, gets charges dropped

MD BALTIMORE — Baltimore County prosecutors have dropped the charges against a Cleveland Browns fan caught on video urinating on former Baltimore Ravens owner Art Modell's grave last summer.

Baltimore County State's Attorney Scott Shellenberger said the disorderly conduct in a cemetery charge against Paul Serbu, 62, who posted a video of himself on the Internet urinating on Modell's grave, was dropped Tuesday. Shellenberger said Serbu wrote an apology letter to the Modell

family, and agreed to appear on Modell's radio show and "subject himself to questioning about the incident."

City closing all ice, hockey rinks early

SD SIOUX FALLS — The city of Sioux Falls is closing its hockey and skating rinks early this year due to inconsistent temperatures.

The city said the inconsistent weather patterns have not allowed it to make ice. It said it's closing all six outdoor skating rinks and both of its hockey rinks.

Temperatures in South Dakota have fluctuated greatly this season, with some areas seeing unusual heat waves in the dead of winter. Rapid City set a city record this year when it reached 73 degrees at the end of January.

Man hit by train suffers nothing but broken arm

MT MISSOULA — A man who tried to jump across the railroad tracks in front of a freight train didn't quite make it and suffered a badly broken arm.

Montana Rail Link spokesman Jim Lewis told the Missoulian that the injured man and a companion had crossed the trestle over the Blackfoot River near Milltown Thursday afternoon, with one walking on each side of the double tracks.



Missoula County Sheriff's Capt. Bill Burt said one man heard the train approaching from behind and ran. The other kept walking and at the last second tried to cross to the other side.

Burt said it appeared the 30-year-old man suffered a compound fracture to his arm and was taken to the hospital. The train was traveling at about 50 mph.

Lewis said both men face citations for trespassing.

Police chase driver who had body in truck

CA CALIFORNIA CITY — Kern County authorities said they have arrested an armed ex-felon who led deputies on a high-speed pursuit with the body of a dead man in the bed of his truck.

Sheriff's spokesman Ray Pruitt said the body was spotted Tuesday as the red pickup traveled near California City.

The driver led police on a 20-minute chase before officers lost sight of him on a dirt road. The truck was later found in a desert area with the body still in the back.

After a search of surrounding foothills, deputies arrested William Patterson, 34. Detectives said it's still unclear what caused the man's death.

Patterson is being held on \$55,000 bail.

From wire reports

TRAVEL

Wombats wanted

Australian activists believe the maligned marsupials warrant respect and rescue

By A. ODYSSEUS PATRICK
Special To The Washington Post

Across the world, wombats are seen as exotic creatures that represent the strange natural wonders of the Australian outback.

But because of their assertive personalities, wombats—marsupials who look like a cross between an oversize gopher and a walking koala—are not beloved in Australia. Drivers regard them as hazards. Farmers see them as pests. Zoos give them less prominence than their more cuddly cousins, the koalas.

But looking for wombats is one of the most interesting ways to experience Australia's national parks, conserva-

tion reserves and state forests, which cover about 10 percent of the country's land mass.

Wombats live in large numbers at Wilsons Promontory on the far southeast coast, one of the most popular national parks in Victoria state. (Campsites must be booked months in advance.) A five-minute walk from the park's main camping area along a coastal path leads to a network of wombat burrows.

Wombats are also common in Tasmania, the large island on Australia's southern tip that has some of its most rugged terrain, and New South Wales, the Texas-size eastern state whose capital is Sydney. Where they live, wombats aren't hard to find. Because



Humane Society International

Roz and Kevin Holmes, founders of a wombat hospital in Cedar Creek, Australia, want to convince Australians that wombats deserve protection.

they don't sweat, the animals control their body heat by burrowing into the ground a few feet to where the temperature is about 75 degrees. Expert and indiscreet diggers, their roomy burrows are so big they often obstruct farming equipment and destroy fences. The best time to find them is on cool evenings when they emerge to eat grass.

"They aren't scared of humans, but they are very easily startled," says Jackie French, an author. "Be polite. Don't intrude. Just watch."

French, Australia's children's laureate, has probably done more to raise awareness of the wombat than any living Australian. In 2001 she persuaded her publisher, HarperCollins, to publish an illustrated children's book about a family harassed by a carrot-loving wombat. "Diary of a Wombat" was a blockbuster, selling 300,000 copies in Australia alone and spawning 31 versions in other languages and sequels.

"They have got a classic persona," says Matt Richel, executive director of the Victorian National Parks Association, a lobby group for nature reserves. "If you get in the way of the wombat and where it wants to go, it will walk over you."

French and Roz Holme, who founded the Cedar Creek Wombat Hospital about 100 miles north of Sydney, are members of a small but highly motivated community dedicated to protecting wombats.

Ask any wombat activist for the best place to find wombats and they'll likely say dead on the side of a road. Even though wombats can run as fast as 25 mph, a lack of natural predators and poor eyesight makes them highly vulnerable to cars. After Roz Holmes and her husband, Kevin, bought 190 acres in a state-owned forest in the mid 2000s, the couple built rudimentary facilities for sick and injured wombats they collected from the roadside or the bush. An ancient trailer served as a hospital. They recently borrowed \$12,000 for a digital X-ray machine and raised enough money from donors, including

French, for a small two-room clinic for simple operations.

For adventurous travelers interested in meeting a couple of Australians passionate about animal welfare, the Holmeses are worth the trip along the steep, SUV-only road to their property. One warning: Cedar Creek is in the Hunter Valley, a wealthy tourist region that produces some of Australia's best wines. Hotel rooms in the area go for up to \$600 a night.

As we left the refuge, a wombat walked out of the bush toward my wife. When she didn't move aside, the animal nipped at her sandal-covered foot. She jumped, startled but unhurt.

"He's come back looking for food," Roz Holmes explained, as if to say: No apologies necessary.



THE WASHINGTON POST

KNOW & GO

Cedar Creek Wombat Hospital (cedarcreekwombatrescue.com) is a private refuge and rescue service located in Cedar Creek, New South Wales, about 100 miles north of Sydney. The owners ask visitors to contact them first. There is no entrance fee, but donations are encouraged.



MUSIC



DEAF JAM

Rapper Sean Forbes
makes himself joyfully heard
on the hip-hop scene

Hip-hop artist Sean Forbes is both deaf and deaf, mixing sign and rhyme for an audience ready to hear and feel.

JEFFREY SAUGER/For The Washington Post

BY ALEX STONE
Special To The Washington Post

Sean Forbes is blowing up.

In 2010, the Detroit-based rapper inked a two-record deal with Web Entertainment, the label that launched Eminem.

Since 2012, he has been touring relentlessly behind his debut album, "Perfect Imperfection," performing for more than 150,000 fans in 60 cities, including a sold-out show at the House of Blues in Los Angeles, where he shared the stage with Stevie Wonder.

His online videos have notched more than 1.3 million hits on YouTube and Facebook.

And, last April, he was crowned outstanding hip-hop artist of the year at the Detroit Music Awards, a nationally recognized industry event.

He also happens to be deaf.

Forbes is the undisputed king of deaf hip-hop, an emerging musical genre that is giving hundreds of thousands of deaf people access to a cultural experience that until recently was all but unknown to them, while also bridging the cultural divide between the world of the deaf and the world of the hearing.

Forbes, 32, is toothy and boyish, with a slaying smile, staves of coal-black hair shorn closely at the sides and a fresco of tattoos on his right bicep. The night I saw him perform before a crammed house at the Aria Entertainment Complex in Toronto during the last leg of his 60-city tour, he wore dark jeans, a black T-shirt, sunglasses and a low-gauge silver chain around his neck.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

MUSIC

FROM PAGE 16

After a sign-language interpreter introduced him, Forbes stormed onstage and launched into his set, an uplifting collision of danceable beats and catchy hip-hop hooks punctuated by the occasional shout-out to “believing in yourself” and “following your dreams.” A deaf guitarist accompanied him, carving an angular, hard-rock edge into the backbeat groove with tube-driven power chords and keening solos.

The crowd was a mix of the deaf and hearing. To make his music user-friendly for all, Forbes vocalizes and signs his lyrics simultaneously, while an LCD screen flashes animated lyrics and capering cartoon graphics in the background.

“His whole goal is to make his music as accessible as possible for everybody,” says Jake Bass, Forbes’ longtime producer. Forbes raps in a slight deaf tenor, but his lyrics are clear and forceful, and he commands the stage with his contagious energy and surefooted swagger. The backbone of his music is a volcanic bassline that shakes the room and makes your flesh tingle.

More important, it’s something that deaf people can hear.

The deaf hear by sensing vibrations through their skin, which triggers activity in the brain that closely resembles hearing. Imaging studies have shown that deaf people, particularly those who lose their hearing early on — such as Forbes, who went deaf at 9 months, following a bout of spinal meningitis — process tactile sensations in the region of the brain that normally governs hearing. This canny bit of neural legerdemain, where one major brain region takes over for another, is called cross-modal plasticity. Once thought impossible, we now know that it commonly occurs in the brains of those who lose one or more senses at an early age. Braille-reading and other tactile tasks, for instance, activate the visual cortex in blind subjects, as if they were seeing with their fingers.

“Deafness does not mean that you can’t hear, only that there is something wrong with the ears,” writes Scottish percussionist Evelyn Glennie in her “Hearing Essay.”

Glennie, deaf since age 8, writes eloquently of being able to distinguish pitches based on where on her body she feels the vibrations: “The low sounds I feel mainly in my legs and feet, and high sounds might be perceptible places on my face, neck and chest.”

Hip-hop, with its punchy, earth-moving beats, is an ideal form of music for the deaf, because it’s easily felt.

“The decibel vibration for a violin is very small, but for a bass beat or even a hook, you’ll be able to feel those notes and differentiate them, especially at a concert venue where they have huge speakers,” says Holly Maniatty, a non-deaf American Sign Language interpreter who specializes in translating rap songs into sign language. She has worked with some of the biggest names in the industry, including Kanye West, Wu-Tang Clan, Jay Z and Public Enemy. “The vibrations are more amplified, so it becomes much more accessible.”

Rap is also an innately gestural form. Rappers are known for their kinetic, often combative hand motions, which resemble by turns a dance and a kind of martial art. But in deaf rap, the hand motions are literal; they also sign. Sign language is a complex system of communication, with its own accents and inflections, idioms and dialects, capable of conveying endless shades of meaning. Many signers will tell you that there are things one can say in sign language that are beyond the reach of spoken words.

Forbes’ mesmerizing, rapid-fire signing has an impulse all its own that’s compelling to watch even if you don’t know what it means. His hands switch from ballistic spasms to soft curves, from smooth, laminar arcs to short, sharp chops, within the span of a single verse, ranging over a rich landscape of tones.

“When I sign rap music, I try to follow the beat with my body,” Forbes says. “I try



JEFFREY SAUER/For The Washington Post

When he was 5, Sean Forbes, seen here in Ferndale, Mich., got a drum set. “From that moment on, I wanted to be a rock star.”

to paint a picture with my hands. You really have to see me to get me.”

Forbes sums this up movingly in his deaf anthem “Watch These Hands,” which he played midway through this two-hour set:

*Watch, watch, watch these hands
They can dance, they can sing
They can dance, they can ...
Watch, watch, watch these hands
This comes the emotional verse 2 break:
Looked at your lips
And you ask what's wrong with us
Why we rode the short bus
The short bus to school
I was fortunate enough
I made it out of Lahser High School
And then I made it out of R.I.T.
Most of the kids I rode the bus with never saw us*

*I hope they're looking down
I dedicate this song to them
I hope they're looking down
I know that they'd be proud*

After the show, I ask Forbes to elaborate on these lyrics.

“I rode the bus with kids from all different walks of life, kids with Down syndrome, autism, some were confined to wheelchairs,” he says. “I was able to drive a car, go to regular classes, and being with these kids really defined me and my outlook on life. There was this little girl that rode my bus. She was 9 years old but was still a baby physically in size, and I remember she passed away during the time I rode the bus with her. I remember going to her funeral. It was so sad to see that small little casket. I basically touch on that a little bit in the song, when I say ‘I hope they’re looking down, I know that they’d be proud.’”

His catchiest song has to be an endearing valentine to comely ladies with hearing loss called “Def Deaf Girls!” — a play on the vintage hip-hop superlative “def,” meaning cool or attractive:

*She's over the top so over the top
But I can't stop, no I can't stop
Something something something about the way she sounds
Her dB's may be low but she's ready to go*

And shortly thereafter, over heavy drums, scratched hooks, and horn blasts:

*They can't hear the rain on the roof
But they know the difference between beer,*

*wine and 100 proof
They can't hear the train comin' down the track
But when they're riding in my car they love to hop in back*

Here, an image of a convertible low-rider hopping on hydraulics lit up the screen.

“He’s so cute!” a woman dancing near the DJ called out. “We love you!”

Forbes was born into a musical family. His mother was a pianist, and his father and uncle played in a country-rock band called the Forbes Brothers. His uncle also worked as an audio engineer for a number of well-known Detroit artists, including Bob Seger and Anita Baker.

“We always had instruments in the house,” Forbes recalls. “I grew up watching shows and seeing firsthand what the business was like.”

Forbes showed an interest in music early on — and an uncanny sense of rhythm. “I would drum-beat on my thighs or on the dashboard of the car or whatever,” he says. “Whenever there was music, I was always following along with it.”

For his fifth birthday, Forbes’ parents bought him a drum set. “From that moment on, I wanted to be a rock star,” he says.

A child prodigy, Forbes was writing songs by age 10 and producing music videos on his parents’ VHS recorder. (Forbes is the only deaf member of his family, and the only one of three siblings to pursue a career in music.)

In 2005, he met composer and producer Jake Bass, son of Web Entertainment co-founder Jeff Bass. With his brother Mark, Jeff Bass produced Eminem’s first two albums and many of the “8 Mile” star’s subsequent hits.

The meeting led to a fruitful collaboration that has spawned more than 100 songs and six videos, with Forbes writing the lyrics and Jake Bass the music. “Everything just kind of gelled from there, and we just started cranking out tracks one after another,” Forbes says.

The first song they released was “I’m Deaf” — which caught fire online, clocking 650,000 views on YouTube. Their follow-up video, “Let’s Mambo,” in which Forbes is seen rapping in a white suit and dancing with Oscar winner and deaf icon Marlee Matlin — she approached Forbes on Twitter after reading an interview he gave on NPR — has been viewed more than 300,000 times.

The success of Forbes’ videos eventually led to a contract with Web Entertainment. “People were digging it, and they were like, ‘You’re on to something here,’” Forbes says. “They believed in what I was doing.”

When he’s not touring or laying down tracks, Forbes co-manages his nonprofit, the Deaf Professional Arts Network, or D-PAN, which produces videos featuring deaf musicians and translates popular songs into sign language.

But, on the whole, Forbes sees himself less as a deaf advocate than a liaison between two cultures.

“Some people think of me as a deaf rapper, but I like to think of myself as an entertainer,” he says. “There aren’t too many things hearing and deaf people can enjoy together. I’m one of those things.”

Indeed, Forbes is the first deaf hip-hop artist to attract a sizable nondeaf following. When he began touring in 2008, nearly all his fans were deaf; these days, his audiences are more or less equally divided between those who can’t hear and those who can’t.

“Sean has really broken through across different audiences, and I think that’s because the material we write is able to connect and resonate with everybody,” Jake Bass says. “This is something that’s just beginning. It will grow and get bigger, because it’s an inspiring story and something that needs to be shared. We need more stories like this. I mean, if a deaf guy can do music and write great songs, why’s stopping anybody else from doing what they want to do?”



Fall Out Boy

American Beauty/American Psycho (Island)

It’s a good thing soulful emo-core popsters Fall Out Boy broke up, had lousy solo careers, and reunited in time to save rock and roll with their 2013 album, “Save Rock and Roll.” That bust-up invigorated the quartet to become more adventurous songwriters/arrangers than in the past. “American Beauty/American Psycho” is everything you could want in a zealously frazzled, pop-cultural-conscious Fall Out Boy record, plus judicious samples of “The Munsters” theme, Suzanne Vega songs, disco and more.

From the steaming “The Kids Aren’t Alright,” with its cutesy, whistling hook, to the surf-rock spin “Uma Thurman,” you get the feeling that sensitive soul man Patrick Stump and frenetic pop-punk Pete Wentz have as many kitsch chuckles up their sleeves as they do wildly catchy tunes. That’s not to say that the album is silly. Jittery dance-ravk cuts such as “Novocaine,” the warmly fanboy-ish “Favorite Record,” and the rolling loneliness of “Twin Skeletons (Hotel in NYC)” sound the trumpets for poignant lyricism and tensely emotive melodies.

— A.D. Amorosi
The Philadelphia Inquirer



Björk

Vulnicura (One Little Indian)

On Björk’s ninth album, “Vulnicura,” the microscope has been turned inward on the Icelandic musician, brutally chronicling the dissolution of her relationship with longtime partner, avant-garde N.Y. filmmaker and sculptor Matthew Barney. Through a sumptuously orchestrated song cycle, Björk explores her fears, frustrations, and despair at watching the world she created together with Barney (never officially mentioned by name in the lyrics) crumble before her. As the album unfolds, “Vulnicura” proves to be one of the most approachable collections of songs she has unleashed upon the public since 2001.

— Ryan Lathan
PopMatters.com

VIDEO GAMES

The freaks come out at night

When the sun sets, the hunter becomes the prey in standout survival game 'Dying Light'

By MICHAEL DARNELL/Stars and Stripes

Some games end up better than their description on paper would make them appear. "Shadows of Mordor" is a prime example, as it was one of the best games of 2014, despite it being summed up as "Assassin's Creed" with a Tolkien-inspired coat of paint.

Techland's "Dying Light," is much the same. This open-world, zombie, parkour thriller is an amalgamation of well-worn elements that initially looks like its developers designed it by throwing darts at a board labeled "AAA game elements."

Fortunately, the ingredients that went into the "Dying Light" come together more like a hearty stew than a pot of undercooked gruel.

The main ingredients are the basic plot and setting that underpin "Dying Light." You play as government operative Kyle Crane, who has been tasked to find a file hidden in the zombie-quarantined city of Harran.

As soon as his feet touch the ground, Crane is nearly killed (some special operative, huh?) before being rescued by a group of survivors who make up one of two major factions vying for control of the ravaged city. The faction's leader is a parkour instructor, who teaches Crane how to survive, Crane has to learn to clamber up over rooftops, shimmy across ledges and leap from several stories up without dying.

This is where the game shines. Ever since 2008's "Mirror's Edge," gaming has had a fascination with parkour. "Assassin's Creed" and "inFamous" have aped the discipline, but have usually boiled a complex activity into "hold A and move the stick to climb."

"Dying Light" is much more akin to "Mirror's Edge," in that you will feel like your input affects what is happening on screen. If you want to climb a ledge, you have to manually look at the ledge, grab it and vault over it. As you progress, more complex moves become available. Toward the end, leaping from rooftop to rooftop, stringing together slides, rolls and grappling-hook maneuvers becomes incredibly satisfying.

As you complete tasks, kill zombies and perform parkour stunts, you'll gain experience points in one of three areas. Agility points are gained by free running, survivor points are gathered by completing missions and power is tied to your combat prowess.

While "Dying Light" is basically one big



game of "the floor is lava," combat is inevitable. As guns are rare in Harran, most of the combat is of the hand-to-hand variety.

First-person melee combat can be tricky, but Techland gets it mostly right here. Zombies are only dangerous in swarms, but the more-advanced "infected" will dodge your attacks. Human enemies will block, kick and attack from a distance and are usually the deadliest monsters around. Not being able to just spam attacks keeps the game feeling fresh long after you'd normally get bored with smashing zombies.

Melee weapons degrade over time (sometimes too quickly). To keep them working, you'll have to open toolboxes, pick locks on chests and dig through trash cans to find crafting items. Most of these are used to keep your weapons in fighting shape, but you'll also pick up blueprints for unique weapons that you can assemble.

Customizable medkits are the main source of healing, and they use some components of one of the game's most powerful offensive weapons, the Molotov cocktail. Often, players will have to choose between a more offensive or defensive strategy, as crafting items are common but not necessarily found in abundance.

That scarcity ties into a central theme of "Dying Light," which is to avoid combat whenever possible. This theme is hampered more when night falls.

Daytime Harran is tough enough, with innumerable zombies and scarce supplies, but the city becomes downright frightening when the sun sets. You will need to use your flashlight or flares in order to see anything as the world goes pitch black — and you're going to want to be able to see.

Special zombies spawn after dark that can move faster than you, can search you out and will even climb after you. If they spot you, they will pursue you relentlessly and can kill you almost instantly.

Death in this game means you lose a substantial amount of your survivor points, but you accumulate more power and agility points during the nighttime.

This presents a great risk/reward system that forces the player to make a choice every night. Do you risk running a nighttime mission to gain more experience, or do you bunk down in one of the safe zones for the night? You will feel real-life tension playing "Dying Light" in the dark, I guarantee it.

It's too bad the main plot of "Dying Light" doesn't offer anything as emotionally satisfying. As thrilling as the rest of the game can be, the main story is like a sad country song stuck in the middle of a dance party playlist.

That's not to say the depressing moments are found in every post-apocalyptic scene or too weighty for the game. On the

When the sun sets in Harran, fresh horrors come about that change the way you approach open-world survival game "Dying Light."

Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment

Overall grade: **B**

contrary, the major flaw is that there are several points where the main plot tries to cash emotional checks that the writing just wasn't able to afford.

For instance, a pivotal moment centers on the death of a certain character. This moment is supposed to be tragic, but comes across as bewildering because Crane has barely interacted with him. "I know he meant a lot to you," another character tells Crane, but the player is more likely left asking, "Who?" than feeling any sort of emotion.

If the game's storytelling revolved solely on the main plot line, there would be no real emotional weight to the game. Luckily, through side missions you'll come across some stories that are, at times, macabre, touching, hilarious and even genuinely gut-wrenching.

Not only are these vignettes enjoyable, but they give the player real motivation to branch off from the main plot line.

I found that while the main story was almost comically bad, the rest of the game more than made up for its deficiencies. The parkour system applied to the game is nearly flawless. The sense of terror and unease, especially at night, never really relents. It may be the first open-world game that is legitimately scary.

Zombie games are a dime a dozen these days, but "Dying Light," stands out among the crowd due to execution of its individual components that result in a game that comes together perhaps better than it had any right to.

Bottom line: B "Dying Light," takes a bunch of unoriginal ideas, mashes them together and somehow creates an experience quite unlike any other game. It's not perfect, but it's the first must-buy game of 2015.

Platforms: PC (reviewed), Xbox One, PlayStation 4

Online: dyinglightgame.com

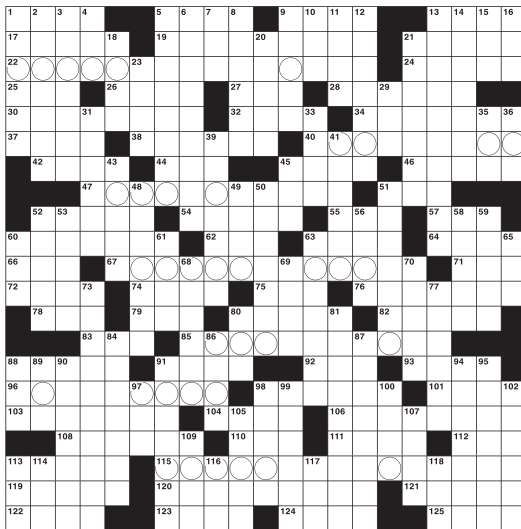
CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

MULTIFACETED

BY JEREMY NEWTON/EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

- ACROSS**
- 1 You may find it on your hands or side
- 5 Use a scalpel on
- 9 "O.G. Original Gangster" rapper
- 13 One connected with the force?
- 17 Not as brazen
- 19 It's worth \$200 in Monopoly
- 21 Princess of Power from 1980s cartoons
- 22 Get noticed
- 24 Wiped
- 25 DuVerney who directed "Selma"
- 26 100%
- 27 Ring call, for short
- 28 More hot
- 30 "Sounds about right"
- 32 In stitches
- 34 Knocking
- 37 Load of money
- 38 Like some windows
- 40 Easily defeats, in sports
- 42 ___ Vogue
- 44 J.F.K. probes
- 45 You may put sock in it
- 46 Director Coen
- 47 Enterprise for which a 14-year-old Buffalo Bill worked
- 51 One of 15 until 1991: Abbr.
- 52 "Baywatch" stars often jogged in it
- 54 Brownie unit
- 55 Japanese "yes"
- 57 ___ Nova (musical style)
- 60 Will, given the chance
- 62 Ninny
- 63 Dickens heroine
- 64 Cold-climate cryptid
- 66 End for an organisation's name
- 67 Exploit a loophole, say
- 71 Radio-knob abbr.
- 72 Switch off
- 74 Unjammed
- 75 Cable airer of vintage films
- 76 Feeling low, short
- 78 Word between two last names
- 79 Trouble
- 80 Conductor announcements
- 82 Baloney
- 83 Newswoman Curry
- 84 Lean back and enjoy the ride?
- 88 Jumbo-size
- 91 ___ fide
- 92 A Giants giant
- 93 Pick out
- 96 Washington landmark that lent its name to a Senate committee
- 98 Equally
- 101 Get the show on the road
- 103 Pursued, as perfection
- 104 Big bra feature
- 106 Sticks in a purse?
- 108 Rotten
- 110 Little ___
- 111 Company also known as 877
- 112 Lifesaver's initials
- 113 Facetious string?
- 115 Big fall from the sky?
- 119 Large shrimp
- 120 Wavering wail
- 121 Like crayons
- 122 One of the Ivies, informally
- 123 Organization with an Exalted Ruler
- 124 Aid in identifying a bird
- 125 Insignificant
- DOWN**
- 1 Hero in a John Irving best seller
- 2 "Eureka!"
- 3 Sainthood prerequisite
- 4 It was a dark period for Poe
- 5 Short supply
- 6 "Like puberty at age 16
- 7 Fatal ending?
- 8 "Bitter in Nigger
- 9 Following behind
- 10 Specialty of Industrial Light & Magic, for short
- 11 Alphas might clash over them
- 12 Buff
- 13 "One making the rounds at a party, perhaps
- 14 Having an unfavorable outlook
- 15 Blunder
- 16 Bit of hope
- 18 Bad recollection?
- 20 Tattooed
- 21 Alternatives to cheddars
- 23 Peanut
- 29 Topmost part of a face
- 31 Persevere
- 33 Drill sgts., e.g.
- 35 What buckets are made in, for short
- 36 Ob_
- 39 It may be a high percent for the 1%
- 41 Football stat
- 43 Chinese-restaurant assurance
- 45 Natl. Courtesy Month
- 48 Disapproving (of)
- 49 Swank
- 50 "First spacecraft to orbit a comet (2014)
- 51 What always comes in halves?
- 52 With 59-Down, permanent ... or, literally, a feature of the answers to the seven starred clues
- 53 Cider server
- 56 Certain operatic voices
- 58 Energize
- 59 See 52-Down
- 60 Symbol of equality, briefly



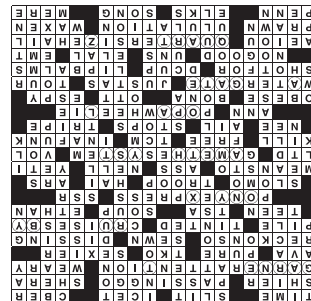
- 61 Ahab's father
- 63 Randy types
- 65 Variety
- 68 Underwater trap
- 69 Flat-bottomed boat
- 70 Hank's wife on "Breaking Bad"
- 73 "Car-dealership option
- 77 Event with a cantina, maybe
- 80 ___ treatment
- 81 "Chooses in the end
- 84 Zombie Strike SlingFire Blaster, for one
- 86 Linear, informally
- 87 Amazon activity
- 88 Hurtful comments?
- 89 "Ridiculous!"
- 90 Agent 007, e.g.
- 91 Really involved
- 94 Long-reaching weapon of yore
- 95 More delish
- 97 Bit of baby talk
- 98 What a general may lead
- 99 "Goals for undergrads
- 100 "I'm such a ___" (klutz's comment)
- 102 Givens on "Wheel of Fortune"
- 105 Weightlifter's exercise
- 107 Went off
- 109 Yawn-inducing
- 113 Android runner, often
- 114 Poet's "prior to"
- 116 Arctic flier
- 117 Olympics host after London
- 118 Spotlight hog

GUNSTON STREET



"Gunston Street" is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and visit gunstonstreet.com.

RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE



KNOWLEDGE

ARCHIVE PHOTO OF THE DAY

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PACIFIC SPORTSBLOG

PACIFIC STORM TRACKER

OMBUDSMAN

GADGETS & CHARTS

Products designed to change your life

By LOU CARLOZO
Tribune News Service

While the pace of technological change can be mind-boggling, the ideas behind the most innovative consumer products boil down to a few basic questions: Will it make your life easier? Does it solve a basic but vexing problem? And definitely this one: Will it inspire envy in your friends?

Technology has produced some great breakthroughs, though some new wrinkles in the marketplace are so simple, you'll wish you'd thought of them yourself. Here we present a few new items that are in stores now or on the way.

Smartphone that outsmarts data diggers

After the Edward Snowden leaks, privacy became a big deal for Americans everywhere. Enter the Blackphone, the first smartphone that keeps your data from getting into anyone's hands. Each Blackphone is built with Privatos, a custom-designed operating system that combines cryptography and security technology with mobile phone convenience. The makers sound like crusaders when they proclaim, "We believe that privacy is a right." They also sound like capitalists, as the Blackphone sells for \$629. But just think: If certain disgraced politicians had used a Blackphone, they might still be in office — which is either a good thing or a very bad thing.

A lock that looks after your bike

The ULOCK is perhaps the most intelligent bike lock ever invented. Developed by an Italian company, it works via smartphone app and does all sorts of nifty things, from closing the lock remotely if you forget to lock up, to giving you a map location so you remember where you've parked. It should be available online in the first half of 2015.

No more whining over warm wine

The website Quirky is a crowd-sourced hub that helps everyday inventors bring their products to life and sell them. And from there comes Icecap. You place the Icecap (\$34.99) in the freezer, then atop your wine glass like a funnel; it cools any beverage by up to 20 degrees in seconds. It will not keep your hotheaded dinner guests chilled, though you could always dump some cooled wine in their lap.

That'll do, piggy bank, that'll do

Also on Quirky, the Porkfolio is a piggy bank that works with a smartphone. It wirelessly connects to an app on your mobile device to track your balance and set financial goals from afar. Its nose lights up in celebration every time a U.S. coin is inserted, and it holds up to \$100 in quarters. At \$20, it's an ideal gift for the kid who — as with all things digital — will figure out how to work it before you do.

The key to charging your phone

A project successfully funded on Kickstarter as of Dec. 24 should bring this prototype phone charger to the marketplace very soon. The Plan V 9-volt battery smartphone recharger is a dangle you keep on your keychain. When your phone quits, you click a 9-volt battery onto it and get back about four hours of talk time. It's the first of its kind because unlike other battery backups — which must be recharged — Plan V will always work so long as you carry (or can buy) a 9-volt battery. Then again, the upside is the downside, too: You have to buy an actual battery or have them on hand. Now all we need is for someone to invent a 9-volt battery that snaps onto your keychain.

GADGET WATCH

Wireless router a great travel companion

By GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

The HooToo TripMate Elite is a great new way to simplify the process of traveling. I'm a fan of all-in-one devices, and this 5-in-1 unit moves to the top of my list. It has an AC adapter for charging, a pair of USB ports, built-in 6000mAh rechargeable battery, Wi-Fi hotspots router and a wireless bridge. It can even set up a personal cloud.

Given all that, you might think you'll have to carry a brick, but it's really nicely portable — about the size of an Apple laptop power adapter.

The USB ports let you charge a smartphone and tablet simultaneously; there's an ethernet port, Internet indicator lights and a power button on the outside.

After you download the TripMate app you can set up the cloud, attach external devices for access and storage, share music or videos, connect multiple devices to the Internet and bridge to existing Wi-Fi connections for a better signal and greater distances.

While this device is great for travel, it's also helpful for doing things at home, including stretching your home Wi-Fi to far-flung rooms.

Online: hootoo.com; \$44.99

The new Qmadix ChargerLeash is so helpful, it made me think it had a built-in babysitter.

The innovative charging cable charges your device and makes sure you don't leave the cable behind — frequent travelers will appreciate this feature.

Like other charging cables, there's a USB connector on one end, my testing sample had a lightning connection on the other end of the 4-foot cable (they also make one with a microUSB connection).

But what makes it unique is the small box in the middle of the cable. A few seconds after disconnecting your device, the box lets out a chirp to alert you that it has indeed been disconnected.

The alert will remind you to retrieve your cable if you forget, or if someone else has disconnected your cable at a charging station.

Online: qmadix.com; \$34.99

Phiaton Corp.'s BT 220 NC wireless Bluetooth 4.0 noise-canceling earbuds maintain their reputation for quality.

The earbuds have a futuristic ergonomic design and 14.3mm drivers in each ear to produce, as advertised, "pure and accurate sound." A big reason for this is the active noise-cancellation technology, which blocks 95 percent of ambient background noise.

All the controls are packaged into a device that clips to your shirt. The device allows you to pair it with your smartphone or tablet and control the volume and mute. It has a USB port, play/forward/back buttons and it powers the earbuds on and off.

If your media is stored on a NFC-enabled



HooToo/TNS

The 5-in-1 HooToo TripMate Elite has an AC adapter for charging, a pair of USB ports, built-in 6000mAh rechargeable battery, Wi-Fi hotspots router and wireless bridge. It's also portable.

Bluetooth device, you can use the BT 220 NC's tap-to-pair NFC technology.

There's also a built-in microphone to use for hands-free calls. The internal battery should support 16 hours of calling time, about 17 hours of music listening (volume levels can affect this) and 300 hours of standby.

If the battery runs out and an immediate charge can't be found, use the included audio cable for a direct connection.

Online: phiaton.com; \$160.55

The Pelican ProGear rugged 80QT Elite Cooler will make you wish for summer even more than you already are amid a mid-February chill.

The cooler's wheels are designed for tough terrain — it's even been certified bear-resistant — but it also works great for just wheeling out to the pool.

Its eight heavy-duty wheels and extended pull handle, not to mention its rather steep price, make it the Cadillac of coolers.

Included is a built-in bottle opener, lid-integrated fish scale and raised anti-skid feet.

Online: pelican.com; \$494.95



PELICAN/TNS

ITUNES MUSIC

Top 10 albums on the iTunes Store for Feb. 11:

1. "1989" Taylor Swift
2. "x" Ed Sheeran
3. "In the Lonely Hour," Sam Smith
4. "Reflection," Love Me Like You Do
5. "Fifty Shades of Grey," (original motion picture soundtrack), various artists
6. "Now That's What I Call Music," ... various artists
7. "Handwritten," Shawn Mendes
8. "Full Speed," Kid Ink
9. "American Beauty/American Psycho," Fall Out Boy
10. "Wallflower," Diana Krall

— Compiled by TNS

SPOTIFY MUSIC

The most streamed tracks on Spotify for Feb. 2-8:

1. Mark Ronson, "Uptown Funk"
2. John Vener, "Thinking Out Loud"
3. Maroon 5, "Sugar"
4. Hozier, "Take Me to Church"
5. Ellie Goulding, "Love Me Like You Do" — from the "Fifty Shades Of Grey" soundtrack
6. The Weeknd, "Earned It" (Fifty Shades Of Grey) — from the "Fifty Shades Of Grey" soundtrack
7. Flo Rida, "GDRF" (feat. Sage The Gemini and Lokas)
8. Sam Smith, "I'm Not The Only One"
9. Usher, "I Don't Mind"
10. Big Sean, "I Don't F--- With You"

— Compiled by The Associated Press

ITUNES MOVIES VIDEO GAMES

Top 10 movies downloaded from the iTunes Store for Feb. 11:

1. "Nightcrawler"
2. "John Wick"
3. "Horrible Bosses 2" (Extended Cut)
4. "The Theory of Everything"
5. "Fury"
6. "What If?"
7. "Gone Girl"
8. "The Homesman"
9. "The Judge"
10. "Birdman"

— Compiled by TNS



Game Informer ranks the Top 10 PlayStation 3 games for February:

1. "Life is Strange Episode One — Chrysalis"
2. "Resident Evil HD Remaster"
3. "Saints Row: Gat Out of Hell"
4. "Dragon Age: Inquisition"
5. "Middle-earth: Shadow of Mordor"
6. "Far Cry 4"
7. "Kingdom Hearts HD 2.5 Remix"
8. "Game of Thrones: Beyond the Iron from Ice"
9. "LittleBigPlanet 3"
10. "Resogun"

— Compiled by TNS

APPS

Top 5 new paid apps for Feb. 11:

ANDROID

1. SpongeBob: Sponge on the Run
2. SpeedRead With Spritz
3. Anime Studio Story
4. Adventure Time Game Wizard
5. HOOK

Top 5 paid apps for Feb. 11:

APPLE

1. Trivia Crack (ad free)
2. Minecraft — Pocket Edition
3. Heads Up!
4. Five Nights at Freddy's 2
5. Afterlight

— Compiled by TNS

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OF THE LEADING STORIES OF THE WEEK.



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BUSINESS/WEATHER

Government gives Apple Pay a boost

By JULIA LOVE

San Jose Mercury News (TNS)

PALO ALTO, Calif. — Apple Pay has won the federal government's stamp of approval.

Speaking at the White House Summit on Cybersecurity and Consumer Protection on Friday, Apple CEO Tim Cook announced that Apple Pay may soon be used for some transactions with the federal government, including federal payment cards and admission to national parks. In a fact sheet detailing the program, the White House emphasized its commitment to promoting secure payment technology. Cook said that completing store transactions with Apple Pay, a payment system built into the latest Apple gadgets that transmits a unique token rather than a user's credit card number, is safer than simply swiping a credit card.

"This is another product where security wasn't an afterthought," he said.



Jeff Chiu/AP

Apple CEO Tim Cook speaks Friday at the White House Summit on Cybersecurity and Consumer Protection in Stanford, Calif.

Cook's announcement came during a summit at Stanford University that brought together leaders from Washington and Silicon Valley to discuss how to boost cybersecurity. Cook said security was part of the reason the company developed Apple Pay, which lets people with the iPhone 6 and

6 Plus buy items in stores by waving their phones and also allows for in-app purchases.

Since the service debuted in October, it has been accepted by a growing number of retailers. Analyst Patrick Moorhead of Moor Insights and Strategy predicted that the federal government's approval will redouble Apple's momentum in the mobile payments space.

"This is really a big deal as it gives Apple access to the millions of federal employees, but more importantly, the billions of Americans who pay federal institutions," he wrote in an email.

Aneesh Chopra, former U.S. Chief Technology Officer, said the move signals the federal government is modernizing how it interacts with citizens.

"I think this is a broader shift toward better digital services, which has been a priority for the president from day one," said Chopra, who is co-founder and executive vice president at Hunch Analytics.

During a conference featuring many calls for public-private partnerships to boost cybersecurity, Cook offered up a fresh example. He stressed that government and the private sector must work together to stamp out cyberattacks — and the stakes are high.

"If those of us in positions of responsibility fail to do everything in our power to protect the right of privacy, we risk something far more valuable than money," he said. "We risk our way of life."

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Feb. 16)	\$1.1711
Dollar buys (Feb. 16)	60.8539
British pound (Feb. 16)	\$1.58
Japanese yen (Feb. 17)	117.00
South Korean won (Feb. 17)	1,072.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
British pound	\$1.5394/6.6496
Canada (dollar)	1.2473
China (Yuan)	6.2427
Denmark (Krone)	6.5367
Egypt (Pound)	7.5279
Euro	\$1.1387/0.8782
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7556
Hungary (Forint)	268.73
Israel (Sheqel)	3.9908
Japan (Yen)	118.77
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2953
Norway (Krone)	6.5596
Philippines (Peso)	44.26
Poland (Zloty)	3.67
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7517
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3547
South Korea (Won)	1,067.78
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9332
Thailand (Baht)	52.60
Turkey (Lira)	2.4590

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany, which with your local military banking facility), commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

MARKET WATCH

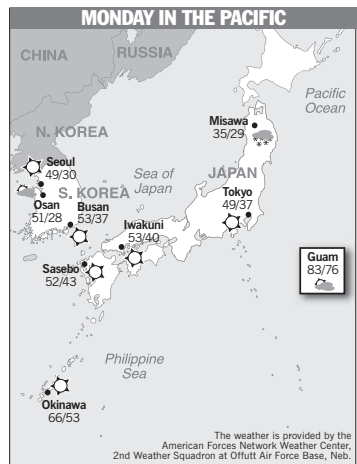
Feb. 13, 2015

Dow Jones industrials	46.97
	18,019.35
Nasdaq composite	36.22
	4,893.84
Standard & Poor's 500	8.51
	2,096.99
Russell 2000	6.87
	1,223.13

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
Account and credit card rates	12.75
Federal funds market rate	0.12
3-month bill	0.02
30-year bond	2.65

WEATHER OUTLOOK



Sunday's US temperatures

City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr
Ablene, Tex.	61	35	Cldy	Chatanooga	29	21	Pcldy
Akron, Ohio	3	-8	Cldy	Cheney	36	22	Cldy
Albany, N.Y.	10	-11	Snow	Chicago	11	3	Snow
Albuquerque	68	36	Pcldy	Cincinnati	13	4	Cldy
Allentown, Pa.	14	-2	Snow	Cleveland	-3	-7	Cldy
Anchorage	36	32	Snow	Colorado Springs	49	23	Cldy
Asheville	24	15	Cldy	Columbia, S.C.	38	22	Cldy
Atlanta	38	27	Cldy	Columbus, Ga.	46	29	Cldy
Atlantic City	17	3	Cldy	Columbus, Ohio	9	-2	Cldy
Austin	71	37	Cldy	Concord, N.H.	15	6	Snow
Baltimore	17	2	Cldy	Corpus Christi	73	63	Cldy
Baton Rouge	65	50	Cldy	Dallas-Ft. Worth	53	37	Cldy
Bilings	46	27	Cldy	Dayton	7	0	Cldy
Birmingham	38	25	Pcldy	Daytona Beach	60	38	Cldy
Bozeman	27	16	Cldy	Denver	46	24	Cldy
Boston	54	32	Cldy	Des Moines	13	6	Cldy
Bridgeport	21	-1	Cldy	Detroit	0	-5	Cldy
Brownsville	75	67	Cldy	Duluth	2	-2	Snow
Buffalo	-5	-12	Snow	El Paso	74	47	Cldy
Burlington, Vt.	3	-12	Snow	Elkins	4	-12	Cldy
Caribou, Maine	-5	-12	Snow	Erie	-4	-10	Snow
Charleston, S.C.	39	24	Cldy	Evansville	53	37	Pcldy
Charlotte, N.C.	31	18	Cldy	Fairbanks	21	10	Cldy
				Fargo	14	3	Snow
				Flagstaff	62	28	Cldy
				Flint	-1	-13	Cldy
				Fort Smith	35	24	Cldy

Fort Wayne	5	-3	Cldy	Louisville	24	15	Pcldy
Fresno	74	47	Cldy	Lubbock	65	25	Pcldy
Goodland	40	21	Cldy	Macon	45	24	Cldy
Grand Junction	57	29	Pcldy	Madison	8	0	Cldy
Grand Rapids	5	-8	Cldy	Medford	63	37	Cldy
Great Falls	44	24	Cldy	Memphis	31	23	Cldy
Greensboro, N.C.	27	12	Cldy	Miami Beach	71	57	Cldy
Hartford	12	-3	Cldy	Midland-Odessa	77	41	Pcldy
Havana	47	26	Cldy	Missoula	11	3	Cldy
Helen	17	-7	Cldy	Mpls-St. Paul	10	6	Snow
Honolulu	78	62	Cldy	Mobile	43	23	Cldy
Houston	72	57	Cldy	Montgomery	45	31	Cldy
Huntsville	32	24	Pcldy	Nashville	25	17	Cldy
Indianapolis	13	5	Cldy	New Orleans	63	35	Pcldy
Jackson, Miss.	50	37	Pcldy	New York City	17	1	Snow
Jacksonville	51	36	Cldy	Newark	17	-1	Snow
Juneau	50	34	Cldy	Norfolk, Va.	25	14	Cldy
Kansas City	19	9	Cldy	North Platte	38	19	Cldy
Key West	70	61	Cldy	Oaklahoma City	55	23	Cldy
Knoxville	26	17	Pcldy	Omaha	17	13	Cldy
Lake Charles	65	56	Cldy	Orlando	69	42	Cldy
Lansing	7	-9	Cldy	Paduach	22	15	Cldy
Las Vegas	78	63	Cldy	Pendleton	53	32	Cldy
Lexington	19	9	Pcldy	Peoria	13	7	Cldy
Lincoln	21	13	Cldy	Philadelphia	15	1	Cldy
Little Rock	35	23	Cldy	Phoenix	82	56	Pcldy
Los Angeles	78	55	Cldy	Pittsburgh	2	-8	Snow

Pocatello	52	29	Pcldy	Sioux City	19	13	Cldy
Portland, Maine	18	-2	Snow	Sioux Falls	19	13	Snow
Portland, Ore.	57	40	Pcldy	Springfield	6	-2	Cldy
Providence	21	-3	Snow	Spokane	48	28	Cldy
Pueblo	50	24	Cldy	Springfield, Ill.	16	9	Cldy
Raleigh-Durham	29	13	Cldy	Springfield, Mo.	24	16	Cldy
Rapid City	43	22	Cldy	Syracuse	19	8	Cldy
Reino	64	33	Cldy	Tallahassee	56	36	Cldy
Richmond	24	13	Cldy	Tampa	68	47	Cldy
Rio Rancho	19	-7	Cldy	Teleso	44	28	Cldy
Rochester	2	-13	Cldy	Topeka	20	11	Cldy
Rockford	9	0	Cldy	Tucson	78	53	Cldy
Sacramento	71	46	Cldy	Tulsa	34	21	Cldy
St. Louis	17	14	Snow	Tupelo	37	24	Pcldy
St. Petersburg	72	52	Cldy	Waco	69	40	Cldy
St. Thomas	84	74	Cldy	Washington, D.C.	62	40	Cldy
Salt Lake City	56	36	Cldy	W. Palm Beach	72	56	Cldy
Salt Lake City	55	33	Cldy	Wichita	45	26	Snow
San Angelo	69	37	Cldy	Wicks-Barre	7	-11	Snow
San Antonio	72	55	Cldy	Wilmington, Del.	15	4	Cldy
San Diego	75	54	Cldy	Youngstown	-5	-9	Cldy
San Francisco	70	53	Cldy				
San Jose	47	30	Cldy				
San Maria	4	-17	Cldy				
Savannah	44	26	Cldy				
Seattle	56	41	Pcldy				
Shreveport	49	36	Pcldy				

National temperature extremes
Hi: Fri., 32, Santa Ana, Calif.
Lo: Fri., -30, Watertown, N.Y.

SPORTS BRIEFS/SKIING

Briefly

Davis, Richardson earn gold medals

The Associated Press

HEERENVEEN, Netherlands — American Shani Davis won his first major title in four years on Saturday, edging Pavel Kulizhnikov of Russia by 0.04 seconds to win the 1,000 meters at the world speedskating championships.

Heather Richardson made it an even better day for the Americans, leading a U.S. one-two when she beat Brittany Bowe in the 500 meters.

The 32-year-old Davis peaked at the right time this season to win the fourth 1,000 title of his career, four years after his last one.

"I needed something to show me I still have what it takes," said Davis, who had a lackluster season and a disastrous Sochi Olympics one year ago. "I was crying I was so happy."

The two-time former Olympic 1,000 champion and world record-holder crossed in 1 minute, 8.57 seconds in the tight event. Local favorite Kjeld Nuis took bronze, 0.12 seconds behind the American.

Richardson and Bowe continued their duel for gold on the ice of the Thialf. On Friday, Bowe had beaten her compatriot over 1,000 but this time there was no stopping Richardson. The sprint specialist won both series of the 500, with Bowe taking second in each race. Overall, Nao Kodaira of Japan took bronze.

Sven Kramer continued his overwhelming domination of the 5,000 meters, winning his sixth world speed skating title by beating his Dutch archrival Jorrit Bergsma.

In the 1,000, American Shani Davis took his fourth world gold, edging Russia's Pavel Kulizhnikov.

Douwe de Vries made it a Dutch triple by taking bronze. It was the second gold medal for Kramer in as many days after he anchored the Netherlands to team gold late Friday.

The Olympic champion over the distance finished in 6 minutes, 9.65 seconds, the fastest time ever skated at sea level. Bergsma had the best intermediate time early on but Kramer used his massive long stride to make the difference over the final laps for a margin of 1.88 seconds.

In the major upset of the day, the Japanese women's pursuit team beat Olympic champion the Netherlands in a tight final. Russia took bronze.

In other winter sports:

■ Sarah Takanashi of Japan won a second world championship with a women's ski jump victory on Saturday at Ljubno, Slovenia, that also kept alive her chances of defending the overall World Cup title.

Takanashi jumped 88 and 90 meters for a total of 248.5 points, beating overall leader Daniela Iraschko-Stolz of Austria by 3.1 points. Sarah Hendrickson of the

United States was third, showing she's also finding her form as she prepares to defend her world title in Falun, Sweden on Friday.

Iraschko-Stolz leads Takanashi by 89 points in the overall standings with two World Cup events remaining, including one more in Ljubno on Sunday.

■ U.S. bobsledder Elana Meyers Taylor finished her two-woman World Cup campaign in dominant fashion Saturday at Sochi, Russia, with her sixth victory of the eight-race season.

The silver medalist at the 2014 Winter Olympics secured her first overall World Cup title last week, making her the first female U.S. pilot to do so for 14 years.

Meyers Taylor continued her form Saturday with brakeman Cherrelle Garrett, winning by 0.61 seconds over two runs from Canada's Kaillie Humphries and Melissa Lotholz.

Third place went to the U.S. duo of Jamie Greubel Poser and Lauren Gibbs, who missed out on silver by 0.01.

Snedeker, Jones tied for lead at Pebble Beach

PEBBLE BEACH, California — Enjoying the best weather Pebble Beach has to offer is one thing. Brandt Snedeker knew he had to take advantage of it with his golf clubs, too.

Snedeker played bogey-free at Spyglass Hill in abundant sunshine and warmth Friday for a 5-under 67 to share the 36-hole lead with Matt Jones in the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am. Jones had a 66 at Spyglass.

They were at 12-under 131. Justin Hicks shot a 68 at Monterey Peninsula and was one shot behind.

John Daly, who started the second round one shot behind, didn't make a birdie over his final 11 holes at Monterey Peninsula and shot a 72. He was six shots behind, and has to play well Saturday to avoid missing his 11th straight cut at this event.

South Carolina recruit arrested for larceny

BEAUFORT, S.C. — South Carolina football recruit Shaimek Blackshear was arrested on a petit larceny charge.

Online records at the Beaufort County Detention Center show he was arrested Friday. Blackshear was released from custody shortly before 10 a.m. Saturday and is due in court March 3.

South Carolina athletic spokesman Steve Pink said the school was aware of the arrest and would let the legal process play out.

Blackshear, 17, is a 6-foot-5 defensive end from Bluffton High School. He signed with the Gamecocks this month. He was rated the nation's 11th best defensive end by Scout.com.



ALESSANDRO TROVATI/AP

American Ted Ligety races down the course Friday during the men's giant slalom at the alpine skiing world championships in Beaver Creek, Colo. Ligety won the race.

Ligety wins 3rd straight giant slalom at worlds

By PAT GRAHAM

The Associated Press

BEAVER CREEK, Colo. — Ted Ligety's mood in the starting gate? Tranquil, of all things.

This was his hill, after all. Didn't matter if he trailed his main rival. Make a clean run, a Ted Ligety-esque run, and just see what transpires, he reminded himself.

So Ligety did — a remarkable, mistake-free final run that slid the American right into the record books. Ligety stormed back from a first-run deficit Friday to become the only man to win three straight giant slalom titles at the world championships.

Behind Marcel Hirscher of Austria by 0.24 seconds after the morning run, Ligety found speed down the course where others couldn't and finished in a time of 2 minutes, 34.16 seconds. Hirscher was second, 0.45 seconds behind, and Alexis Pinturault of France earned the bronze.

"To be able to come through and pull it off is awesome," said the 30-year-old Ligety, who's from Park City, Utah.

Like there was ever a doubt, even as Ligety trailed. Well, maybe a little.

See, Hirscher won three straight World Cup GS races entering this competition. And while this is Ligety's course, a place where he's won five World Cup GS races, including last December, Hirscher seemed well-positioned to spring the upset.

Or so it appeared anyway. But races like this are why Ligety's fellow skiers often refer to him as "Mr. GS." He's cool under pressure.

"Ted was, today, in his own league," said Germany's Felix Neureuther, who finished fourth, 1.10 seconds behind Ligety. "He's amazing."

With this win, Ligety, the Olympic GS champ from Sochi, cements his name among the legends of the sport. The only other men to win three straight world titles in any discipline are Sweden's Ingemar Stenmark (slalom, 1978, '80, '82) and Norway's Kjetil Andre Aamodt (combined, '97, '99, 2001).

Impressed to be among such esteemed company?

"I'm not somebody who worries about the statistics when I'm doing it," said Ligety, who won the 2011 world GS title in Germany and again two years ago in Austria, which was part of his three gold medal performance. "It's cool to be able to achieve



MARCO TROVATI/AP

Ted Ligety sprays a bottle of sparkling wine after winning the men's giant slalom.

what I've achieved and be able to reflect back on those things later."

It took the ninth race into these championships, but the Americans finally captured that elusive first gold medal. The U.S. team had a good chance at another medal on Saturday when Olympic slalom champion Mikaela Shiffrin competed in her signature event. Meanwhile, the Austrians bumped their medal total to nine, five more than the U.S.

NHL



CHARLES REX ARNGAST/AP

Chicago goalie Corey Crawford reaches for a shot on goal during the first period of Friday's game against New Jersey in Chicago. Crawford stopped 25 shots in the Blackhawks' 3-1 victory.

Roundup

Red-hot Hossa propels Blackhawks past Devils

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Marian Hossa is smiling again. The swagger is back. While the Chicago Blackhawks are searching for successful line combinations, Hossa is rolling.

The veteran winger scored his seventh goal in four games, and the Blackhawks rallied for a 3-1 victory over the New Jersey Devils on Friday night.

"When you've got some confidence, the puck is with you," Hossa said. "You try to do a little more. At the same time, you try to keep things simple, and just put a puck at the net."

Hossa also had an assist on Jonathan Toews' tiebreaking goal in the third as the Blackhawks rebounded from a pair of losses at the start of an eight-game homestand. Kris Versteeg tacked on an empty-net score, and Corey Crawford made 25 saves.

Peter Harrold scored in the first for New Jersey, which has dropped three in a row. Cory Schneider had 32 stops.

New Jersey got its only goal from an unlikely source in the first period.

Scott Gomez was skating behind the net when he made a nice pass in front to Harrold, who watched his one-timer go off Crawford's left pad and then the post for his second goal of the season. It was

the defenseman's fourth goal in four seasons with the Devils.

Blue Jackets 4, Flyers 3 (OT): Artem Anisimov scored 2:17 into overtime to lift host Columbus to a come-from-behind win.

The Blue Jackets had been winning when trailing after two periods (0-20-0) and the Flyers had not lost in regulation when ahead going into the third period (13-0-2).

Flyers goalie Ray Emery stopped James Wisniewski's one-timer, but Anisimov jumped on the short rebound and shifted the puck to his forehead to beat Emery.

Brandon Dubinsky had a goal and an assist, Cam Atkinson scored, and Jared Boll found the net for the first time in 64 games for the Blue Jackets.

Sharks 4, Coyotes 2: Joe Pavelski scored three goals, Antti Niemi stopped 32 shots and visiting San Jose ended a three-game losing streak.

San Jose tightened up after falling into a 2-0 hole in the first period. Pavelski scored twice in the second to reach the 30-goal mark for the third time in his career. He added an empty-net goal for his fourth career hat trick.

Barclay Goodrow also led to help Sharks coach Todd McLellan reach 300 wins in 515 career games. Anaheim's Bruce Boudreau is the only coach in NHL

history to reach the milestone faster, 496 games.

Stars 2, Panthers 0: Kari Lehtonen shut out visiting Florida, making 37 saves. But Dallas lost three players to injuries.

Lehtonen made the Stars' two first-period goals hold up for their third straight win. The Panthers have lost on consecutive nights.

Tyler Seguin, Dallas' leader with 29 goals and 59 points, was helped off the ice after being checked in the lower leg by defenseman Dmitry Kulikov in the third period. Patrick Eaves followed Seguin to the locker room 51 seconds later after teammate John Klingberg's wrist shot hit Eaves in the head.

A third Stars forward, Ales Hemsky, left in the first period with a lower body injury.

Canucks 5, Bruins 2: Shawn Matthias scored the first hat trick of his career with two goals in the opening period and one in the third for host Vancouver.

Radim Vrbata and Jannik Hansen, into an empty net, had the other goals for Vancouver, while Zack Kassian added two assists. Ryan Miller made 21 saves to get the win in his 600th NHL game.

Patrice Bergeron and Chris Kelly replied for Boston, which got 20 saves from Tuukka Rask.

Matthias had scored two goals in a game six times before Friday.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division		GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Montreal	54	35	15	4	5	74	146	122
Tampa Bay	57	34	17	6	6	74	184	154
Detroit	53	31	13	9	3	71	156	134
Boston	55	28	20	7	6	63	144	141
Florida	54	24	19	11	4	59	134	151
Ottawa	53	21	22	10	5	52	145	159
Buffalo	56	23	29	4	5	50	159	173
Toronto	55	16	36	3	5	33	103	191

Metropolitan Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
N.Y. Islanders	55	36	18	1	73	173	153
Pittsburgh	55	32	15	8	72	160	139
N.Y. Rangers	53	32	16	5	69	163	130
Washington	55	29	16	10	68	162	139
Philadelphia	55	23	22	10	56	149	161
Columbus	53	24	26	3	51	139	164
New Jersey	55	21	25	9	51	123	151
Carolina	53	19	27	7	45	117	141

Western Conference

Central Division		GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Nashville	56	37	12	6	8	80	167	130
St. Louis	55	36	15	4	7	76	176	136
Chicago	56	34	18	4	7	72	170	130
Winnipeg	57	28	19	10	6	65	155	149
Minnesota	54	27	20	7	7	61	147	146
Dallas	55	26	21	8	6	60	174	175
Colorado	52	22	22	11	5	55	140	158

Pacific Division

Anaheim	56	35	14	7	77	166	155
San Jose	57	29	20	8	66	162	160
Vancouver	54	31	20	3	65	153	142
Calgary	55	30	22	3	63	159	142
Los Angeles	54	24	18	12	60	149	147
Arizona	56	20	29	7	47	128	184
Edmonton	56	16	31	9	41	129	184

Note: Two points for a win, one point

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.

Friday's games
Columbus 4, Philadelphia 3, OT
Chicago 5, New Jersey 1
Dallas 2, Florida 0
Vancouver 5, Boston 2

Saturday's games
Edmonton at Ottawa
Toronto at Montreal
Winnipeg at Detroit
Columbus at N.Y. Islanders
New Jersey at Nashville
Carolina at Minnesota
N.Y. Rangers at Arizona
Dallas at Colorado

Sunday's games
Pittsburgh at Chicago
St. Louis at Florida
Philadelphia at Buffalo
Washington at Anaheim
Tampa Bay at San Jose

Monday's games
N.Y. Rangers at N.Y. Islanders
Carolina at Ottawa
Montreal at Detroit
Edmonton at Winnipeg
Arizona at Colorado
Boston at Calgary
Minnesota at Vancouver
Tampa Bay at Los Angeles

Friday
Stars 2, Panthers 0
Florida 0 0 0-0
Dallas 2 0 0-2

First Period—1, Dallas, Ja.Benn 19 (Fiddler), 9:27 (sh), 2, Dallas, Spezza 11 (Cole, Demers), 17:09.

Shots on Goal—Florida 9-11-37. **Dallas** 10-20-37.

Power-play opportunities—Florida 0 of 2; **Dallas** 0 of 2.

Goals—Florida, Montoya 4-5-2 (28 shots-26 saves), Dallas, Lehtonen 2-4-2 (8-37-44).

A—18,211 (18,522), T—2:39.

Blue Jackets 4, Flyers 3 (OT)

Philadelphia 1 1 1 0-3
Columbus 2 2 2 3-4
First Period—1, Philadelphia, Simmonds 10:27 (Goetz), 10:33.

Second Period—2, Columbus, Dubinsky 4 (Connauton), 8:09, 3, Philadelphia, Couturier 12 (Simmonds), 17:47.

Third Period—1, Philadelphia, Simmonds 12 (Giroux, Voracek), 5:04 (pp), 5, Columbus, Boll 1 (Trope, Letestu), 8:38, 6, Columbus, Atkinson 12 (Hartnell, Dubinsky), 15:20.

Overtime—7, Columbus, Anisimov 3 (Wisniewski, Foligno), 2:17.

Shots on Goal—Philadelphia 7-8-9-1-25; **Columbus** 11-11-8-3-33.

Power-play opportunities—Philadelphia 1 of 3; **Columbus** 0 of 1.

Goals—Philadelphia, Emery 9-9-3 (33 shots-29 saves), Columbus, McElhinney 8-9-1 (25-22).

A—16,403 (18,144), T—2:27.

Blackhawks 3, Devils 1

New Jersey 1 0 0-1
Chicago 0 0 3-3
First Period—1, New Jersey, Harrold 2 (Gomez, Merrill), 15:30.

Third Period—2, Chicago, Hossa 17 (Saunders, Seabrook), 1:27 (pp), 3, Chicago, Toews 16 (Hossa, Seabrook), 4:10, 4, Chicago, Versteeg 10 (Keith), 19:16 (en).

Shots on Goal—New Jersey 8-9-9-26. **Chicago** 8-10-17-35.

Power-play opportunities—New Jersey 0 of 2; **Chicago** 1 of 4.

Goals—New Jersey, Schneider 19-21-5 (14 shots-32 saves), Chicago, Crawford 22-13-2 (26-25).

A—22,186 (19,717), T—2:17.

Sharks 4, Coyotes 2

San Jose 0 2 2-4
Arizona 2 0 0-2
First Period—1, Arizona, Arcobello 9 (Stoner), 1:42, 2, Arizona, Erccoli 8 (Gagner, Fandl), 15:07 (pp).

Second Period—3, San Jose, Pavelski 29 (Thornhill, Hannan), 2:27, 4, San Jose, Pavelski 30 (Couture, Thornhill), 13:09 (pp).

Third Period—5, San Jose, Goodrow 4 (Burns, Niemi), 6:23, 6, San Jose, Pavelski 31 (Thornhill), 18:34 (en).

Shots on Goal—San Jose 7-8-11-26. **Arizona** 12-12-15.

Power-play opportunities—San Jose 1 of 3; **Arizona** 0 of 2.

Goals—San Jose, Niemi 23-13-7 (36 shots-34 saves), Arizona, Smith 10-24-5 (22-22).

A—16,713 (17,125), T—2:33.

Canucks 5, Bruins 2

Boston 1 0 1-2
Vancouver 2 1 2-5
First Period—1, Vancouver, Matthias 11 (Kassian, Dorsett), 1:41, 2, Vancouver, Matthias 12, 5:03, 3, Boston, Bergeron 16, 9:38.

Second Period—4, Vancouver, Vrbata 21 (Higgins, Veit), 9:26.

Third Period—5, Boston, Kelly 7, 5:41, 6, Vancouver, Matthias 13 (Kassian), 6:09, 7, Vancouver, Hansen 11 (Horvat, Tanev), 18:00 (en).

Shots on Goal—Boston 10-4-9-23. **Vancouver** 7-12-25.

Power-play opportunities—Boston 0 of 3; **Vancouver** 0 of 3.

Goals—Boston, Rask 23-15-7 (24 shots-30 saves), Vancouver, RMiller 26-15-21.

A—18,870 (18,910), T—2:23.

Calendar

Feb. 21 — Stadium Series: Los Angeles vs. San Jose at Santa Clara, Calif.



DARBY DYCK, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

Boston goalie Tuukka Rask watches as the skate of Vancouver's Derek Dorsett gets close to his mask while Dorsett tries to re-direct the puck during Friday's game in Vancouver, British Columbia.

NHL

Confident Wild move back into contention

By DAVE CAMPBELL
The Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Hockey might be the streakiest of all the major professional sports, a mystery exemplified no better than by the Minnesota Wild this season.

One month ago, they were a self-defeating mess summed up succinctly at the time by All-Star defenseman Ryan Suter: "I don't know what the heck is going on. Every day's a bad day."

Buoyed by the acquisition of goalie Devan Dubnyk, the Wild have now gone 9-1-2 in their last 12 games to zoom back into contention for the playoffs. Their record was third-worst in the Western Conference on Jan. 14, with a 2-8-4 mark in their previous 14 games, the day they traded for Dubnyk. Now they're in ninth place, one spot out.

The contrast in confidence cannot be overstated.

"You learn to win in every different kind of way and every different kind of situation," Dubnyk said after a 2-1 win over Florida on Thursday. "We've been doing that through this run here, and it just makes you feel like going into every game like you can win every game. That's a fun way to play hockey. That's a really nice feeling, and we're going to hold onto it and keep working to keep that feeling."

Dubnyk has been nothing but brilliant, starting all 12 games in the net since his arrival in a trade with Arizona and allowing only 17 goals. The old NHL adage about a hot goalie being a team's best asset has never been truer here.

The power play group, while ranked 26th in the league at a scoring rate of a mere 16.1 percent, has been sharper lately, too. With depth on the wings depleted by long-term injuries to Jason Zucker, Matt Cooke and Ryan Carter, the Kotivier-centered first line of Zach Parise and Jason Pominville has found a rhythm at a critical time.

For all the strides they've made, the Wild are staring at a daunting final stretch.

They're a mere two points out of the second wild card slot, but with 28 games to go there's a long time left to maintain this rhythm. There are teams right behind them, including defending Stanley Cup champion Los Angeles, to fend off as well as those in front of them to catch.



ROSS D. FRANKLIN/AP

Detroit goalie Petr Mrazek, left, prepares to make a save on a shot by Arizona's Lauri Korpikoski on Feb. 7 in Glendale, Ariz.

Red Wings keep rolling

Detroit trying to keep playoff streak alive with young talent

By NOAH TRISTER
The Associated Press

THE latest issue facing the Detroit Red Wings sort of sums up their season so far: Goalie Jimmy Howard is back from a groin injury, but in his absence, Petr Mrazek went 8-2 in 11 starts.

A nice dilemma to have. After barely making the playoffs the last two seasons, Detroit looks like a threat again to make a deep postseason run. Tomas Tatar, Gustav Nyquist and Danny DeKeyser aren't established stars yet, but they're part of a new wave of talent that has helped Detroit supplement its aging core during a period of transition.

"I think the season's gone real well," coach Mike Babcock said. "Just coming into the season, we didn't know where we'd be. We've got a vastly improved group, we're getting better. We seem to be competitive on most nights."

The Red Wings were only three points out of first place in the Atlantic Division heading into Saturday night's game against Winnipeg. In 2013 and 2014, Detroit had to scramble to extend its streak of postseason appearances, but this year it looks like the

Red Wings will have no trouble reaching the playoffs for a 24th consecutive season.

The streak has withstood the retirement of Nicklas Lidstrom before the 2013 season and back surgery that sidelined Henrik Zetterberg down the stretch last year. At 36, Pavel Datsyuk has been slowed by his own health issues.

With Howard injured, last month's All-Star game did not include a single Detroit player. The Red Wings are rolling along anyway. They endured a six-game losing streak in December, but four of those defeats were in shootouts. Since then, Detroit has won 14 of 19.

Zetterberg has been healthy this season and tops the team with 48 points, but it's the 24-year-old Tatar who leads Detroit in goals with 23.

"He's a passionate kid who loves hockey," Babcock said. "Tats has a skill set, and he has a drive to be really good and he's ultra-competitive, so that adds up to getting better each and every day you're here, because you're serious about your craft."

Detroit has had a hard time luring the game's most coveted free agents over the last few off-seasons, but the Red Wings have developed talent from within. Tatar was a second-round draft pick in 2009. Nyquist, in the midst of his second straight 20-goal



ROSS D. FRANKLIN/AP

Tomas Tatar leads Detroit with 23 goals.

season, was a fourth-rounder in 2008. DeKeyser signed with the Red Wings in 2013 after playing college hockey at Western Michigan. He's second on the team in ice time, trailing only fellow defenseman Niklas Kronwall.

"It just goes to show you again that this organization does something right," Kronwall said. "Guys are coming up every year. That's what we need."



JIM MONE/AP

Minnesota goalie Devan Dubnyk is 9-1-2 since being acquired from Arizona.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL



RICK DANZ/AP

Illinois' Rayvonte Rice pulls down a rebound from Michigan's Ricky Doyle on Thursday in Champaign, Ill. Rice fit right in with the Illini in his first game back from injury and suspension, helping his team to an overtime victory over the Wolverines.

Returning Rice fitting in 'just fine' with Illini

Illinois guard's return should help in postseason push

By DAVID MERCER
The Associated Press

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. — While Illinois guard Rayvonte Rice sat idle with a broken hand and a suspension, a funny thing happened to his team. It learned to play without its leading rebounder and scorer.

And it won without him, too, going 6-3. But at least through one game, Rice and the Illini (17-8, 7-5 Big Ten) answered the question how the team would do after his return with two words: Just fine.

"I had great peace of mind because our guys competed their tails off," coach John Groce said after Thursday's win over Michigan.

The overtime victory pushed Illinois into the middle of the Big Ten standings, tied for sixth with Indiana.

The Illini have also forced their way back into the postseason discussion. With conference games left at Wisconsin, Iowa and Purdue and at home against Michigan State, Northwestern and Nebraska, getting to 20 wins before the conference tournament is possible.

The Illinois team that was all but buried before it came back to beat Michigan is not the team that Rice left when he broke his left hand the first week of January.

That team would have looked to him for points as the clock ticked down. He was averaging 17.2 points a game when he hurt his hand and, at the time, no one else on the roster was close.

But over that nine-game stretch, including three

straight wins following Rice's Jan. 31 suspension for a team-rules violation that Groce won't discuss, Illinois turned the keys over to sophomores Malcolm Hill and Kendrick Nunn. They've both been double-figure scorers in Rice's absence, and each turned in at least one dominant scoring game.

It was Nunn's turn against Michigan, leading Illinois with 21 points and he had three assists. And he showed a little veteran wisdom.

The Illini couldn't hit anything in the game's opening minutes, and struggled to make shots much of the night. At halftime they were shooting 30 percent from the field and Nunn was 2-for-6.

But he hit on four of his last five shots, including a pair of jumpers in the game's final 2:06 to bring the Illini back from a five-point deficit to the 50-50 tie they took to overtime.

"We just keep shooting," he said. "Stay poised and get it done on the defensive side and it'll even out."

Rice was visibly rusty Thursday, missing on five of his seven shots. But when Illinois needed him late, Rice was there.

The second of Nunn's jumpers, the three-pointer that tied it up, followed a big, powerful rebound from Rice. He emphatically pulled the ball down after a miss by Spike Albrecht, locked it up tight with both arms and, with a satisfied smile on his face, yelled to no one in particular "Let's go!" "I thought I brought it the right way," Groce said about Rice, who wasn't made available to reporters after the game. "I thought he tried to fit in and help us win, and boy did he do that."

'I thought he played the right way. I thought he tried to fit in and help us win, and boy did he do that.'

John Groce
Illinois head coach

Mountain West could send two teams to tourney

By JOHN MARSHALL
The Associated Press

As an automatic-qualifying conference, the Mountain West is guaranteed to have one team get into the NCAA tournament. The conference appears to be in decent shape to add another for the second straight season.

Getting a third or fourth into the bracket will likely depend on what happens the final month of the season in a conference where the teams seem to beat up each other every week.

"A lot of times, when you have a number of quality teams, they tend to beat each other up along the way," said Scott Barnes, athletic director at Utah State and the chair of the NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Committee. "The Mountain West is a strong conference."

San Diego State entered the season with high expectations after reaching the Sweet 16 a year ago, but dropped out of The Associated Press Top 25 in late December. The Aztecs (19-6) lead the Mountain West at 9-3, a half-game ahead of Boise State, and have a decent NCAA résumé.

The Broncos (18-6) gave their NCAA tournament chances a



GREGORY BULL/AP

San Diego State guard Dakari Allen, left, reacts after picking up a foul next to Wyoming guard Josh Adams during Wednesday's game in San Diego. The Aztecs and Cowboys are both putting together strong cases for NCAA tournament invitations.

boost with a win over the Aztecs and another over Air Force last week to stretch their winning streak to eight games. They could have a good shot if they don't fall apart late in the season.

Wyoming (19-6) was ranked

earlier this season, but took a hit when star player Larry Nance Jr. came down with mononucleosis. The Cowboys lost their first two games without him, and getting him back and healthy will likely determine Wyoming's NCAA fate.

Colorado State (21-4) has a good record and a strong RPI, but was swept by Wyoming for the first time since 2009 and has a loss to New Mexico. The Rams looked good now, but their chances will depend on what happens from here.

A few more teams that are rising and falling on the NCAA tournament bubble:

On the rise

Georgia: A road win over Texas A&M was a big boost. Having a top-25 RPI and top-25 strength of schedule should put the Bulldogs (16-7) in good position for the bracket, barring a late-season collapse.

Oregon: The Ducks (18-7) have had a nice surge after a shaky stretch early in the Pac-12 season, their only loss the past seven games to Arizona. That was a blowout, but the Ducks have won four straight since. Saturday's bubble-team showdown with UCLA will be huge.

Texas: The Longhorns (16-8) have a losing record in the Big 12 (5-6) and recently went through a four-game losing streak. Still, Texas has won its past two games, over Kansas State and TCU, and a résumé that has no real glaring losses. With the strength of the

Big 12, the Longhorns could find a way into the bracket if they play well down the stretch.

Falling fast

Virginia Commonwealth: The Rams are No. 20 in the latest AP poll and would seem like a lock to be in the field of 68 if the bracket were picked today. Problem is, VCU will be without point guard Briante Weber for the rest of the season due to a knee injury. The Rams (18-6) have lost three of four games since he was injured, though the last two were also without leading scorer Treveon Graham due to an ankle sprain. VCU just needs to steady the ship at this point.

Miami: Once in good position for an NCAA invite, the Hurricanes (15-9) have stumbled over the last two weeks, losing three of their past four games. Miami has played a tough schedule, but hasn't been so great against teams it was supposed to beat.

Michigan: The Wolverines' losing streak stretched to four games with an overtime setback Thursday against Illinois, another team trying to get off the bubble. Michigan (13-12) also has a now-famous loss to New Jersey Institute of Technology, which the selection committee isn't likely to forget.

NBA

James elected VP of NBAPA

By TOM WITHERS
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — LeBron James is about to play a new power position — vice president.

The Cavaliers star was unanimously elected first vice president of the National Basketball Players Association on Friday, giving the game's top player a leadership role within a union set to square off in the future with the league's owners over revenue.

James was elected during the union's annual meeting as part of All-Star weekend at hotel near Times Square. A person familiar with James' election said Clippers All-Star guard Chris Paul, the union's president, had urged the four-time MVP to accept a prominent role within the union. The person, who spoke on condition of anonymity before union executive director Michele Roberts announced the election, said James wanted to be deeply involved in future collective bargaining with the league.



James

Roberts could hardly wait to announce James' addition.

"We have a new vice president who was elected unanimously. His name is LeBron James," she said, saying it slowly for emphasis. "I can not tell you how delighted I am because it simply confirms that our union is supported by players all across the spectrum. LeBron's addition to our executive committee is evidence of that. This is a great day for our union."

James, who considered running for president before Paul was elected, has been outspoken on several player-related issues already. But he'll now have a formal seat alongside Paul at the bargaining table, giving the union a formidable executive branch at an important time.

Players or owners can opt out of the current CBA following the 2016-17 season, and the sides appear to be headed toward a showdown over revenue, which will grow exponentially with a new, \$24 billion television deal set to kick in after the 2015-16 season.

One of the main reasons James signed only a one-year contract with a player option in Cleveland last summer was to ensure he would be a free agent in 2016 and maximize his earnings.

Roberts said James serving as an executive gives the union obvious clout.

"LeBron has been a force to be reckoned with among our players since the man has hit the court," she said. "We have always wanted to have players of influence included in our executive committee. It gets your (media) attention. It gets all of your attention."

Roberts said the union rejected a proposal from the league about raising the salary cap incrementally.

Earlier, James appeared at an NBA service event with commissioner Adam Silver, who said he has spoken in the past to the 30-year-old about ways to help players. Silver said the open dialogue with James — and other players — is vital to the league's sustained well-being and critical to avoid the kind of lockout that damaged the NBA's image in 2011-12.

"We're always focused on building a relationship directly with the players and the players' association, so (a lockout) is not a concern of mine right now."



FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP

Kevin Hart, center, and Michael Rapaport, left, defend Mo'ne Davis, right, during the first half of the NBA All-Star celebrity game on Friday in New York. Hart, who scored 15 points in the game, was named MVP for a fourth time.

Mo'ne shines in celebrity game

13-year-old Little League phenom shows off hardwood skills

By DOUG FEINBERG
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Little League phenom Mo'ne Davis was so impressive on a basketball court she momentarily silenced trash-talking "Wedding Ringer" star Kevin Hart.

Playing in the All-Star Celebrity Game against opponents more than twice her age, the 13-year-old drove past Hart, the game's MVP for the fourth time, with a spectacular spin move for an easy layup in the first quarter Friday night.

"That was pretty cool," Davis said. "I work on it, but usually don't do it. It was the right time to do it."

Hart, who like Davis is from Philadelphia, said, "No excuses," as he returned to the huddle shortly after her basket.

Madison Square Garden was abuzz with stars from the NBA, WNBA and Hollywood two nights before the NBA All-Star Game is played Sunday. But much of the attention was on the teenager, who got one of the loudest ovations from the crowd when she was introduced before the game.

Davis, a pitcher, shot to fame as the first girl to win a Little League World Series game. Only in eighth grade, Davis already plays basketball for the high school varsity team.

"It was a lot of fun, a lot of people never saw me play basketball," she said. "To play in the celebrity All-Star game was pretty cool."

The Associated Press Female Athlete of the Year finished the All-Star Game with four points, helping the West team beat the East 59-51. Hart had 15 points.

"She was really impressive out there,"



FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP

Kevin Hart lifts the trophy for Most Valuable Player after the NBA All-Star celebrity game in New York.

said WNBA star Skylar Diggins. "She definitely held her own."

Davis was a little star struck, too. She made sure to take a photo with Diggins after the game before she left.

The West team was coached by ESPN personality Mike Golic and Spike Lee, who was wearing a blue hat with orange

trim in honor of his beloved New York Knicks. Lee directed a commercial that starred Davis. Carmelo Anthony along with ESPN personality Mike Greenberg coached the East team.

The game also included actors Anthony Anderson, Common, Nick Cannon, Sarah Silverman, Ansel Elgort, Chadwick Boseman, Jesse Williams and Michael Rapaport, who grew up in New York City. Williams, who stars on Grey's Anatomy, injured his knee with 5 minutes left in the game and was helped off the court and back to the locker room.

Bollywood star Abhishek Bachchan also played as did singer Win Butler of Arcade Fire.

NBA Hall of Famer and New York native Chris Mullin played as did former New York Knicks' star Allan Houston. Current WNBA players Diggins, Tina Charles and Shoni Schimmel represented the league. Schimmel, who was the MVP of the WNBA All-Star game this past year, tricked Silverman — who was on the other team, to give her the ball under the basket which the Atlanta Dream star converted for a layup.

She led all scorers with 17 points. "This was awesome," Schimmel said. "Really had a great time playing here in this."

Memphis Grizzlies owner Robert Pera also played, showing off his basketball skills. A few years back he tried to challenge Michael Jordan to a 1-on-1 game for charity that never developed.

Pera and Diggins finished with 13 points each to lead the West.

This was the first time that the celebrity game was played at an NBA arena.

NBA

Coming full circle

Career path of Golden State's Kerr leads to NY as West All-Star coach

By ANTONIO GONZALEZ
The Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Steve Kerr is smiling a lot these days. He can drive 15 minutes to watch his daughter, Maddy, play volleyball at the University of California. He can take a short flight to see his son, Nick, compete on the University of San Diego's basketball team. And he can summon his wife, Margot, and their youngest son, Matthew, for weekend trips to the Bay Area from their Southern California home.

As if being surrounded by family wasn't sweet enough, Kerr's career has never been better.

The rookie coach has guided the Golden State Warriors (42-9) to the NBA's best record, earned the right to lead the Western Conference in the All-Star Game and built a strong case for

“The one great move that I made was just taking the Warriors’ job. That was a great move.”

Steve Kerr
Golden State coach

he reversed course 3,000 miles west.

Back then, Kerr verbally committed to coach the New York Knicks and help mentor Phil Jackson rebuild the fallen franchise, which has been a disaster so far. Instead, the Warriors fired Mark Jackson a few days later and convinced Kerr to coach a championship-caliber roster closer to home.

“The one great move that I made was just taking the Warriors’ job. That was a great move,” Kerr said.

Just about everything else over the last nine months has worked out pretty well, too.

Kerr's career choice of a lifetime will come full circle Sunday night when he coaches the West in the All-Star game at Madison Square Garden, where he could be directing the last-place Knicks (10-42) now. He insists he never wonders “what could have been” in the Big Apple because he's too focused on the next practice, the next game and the next step to bring the Bay Area its first NBA championship in 40 years.

It's a process Kerr started after taking over, and he hasn't slowed down since.

He helped players get over Jackson's drama-filled dismissal by connecting with them on a personal level, such as playing golf



Rich PEDRONCELLI/AP

Golden State's Steve Kerr had verbally committed to the Knicks when he opted to coach the Warriors when the job opened up. He returns to New York this weekend to lead the Western Conference in the All-Star Game.

with point guard Stephen Curry, flying to Australia to meet with center Andrew Bogut and shutting down Los Angeles' gridlocked traffic for get-to-know-you lunches with forward David Lee.

That trust has built over time and helped Kerr learn how to push his players.

One notable instance came before Clay Thompson scored an NBA-record 37 points in the third quarter of a win against Sacramento on Jan. 23. In the halftime

locker room, Kerr questioned and critiqued his players' focus and took an extraordinary measure to motivate them.

“Honestly, he just said at half-time he wasn't calling anything. He wasn't going to call any plays. He was just going to let us figure it out and make us get our focus back. And that's what we did,” Thompson said. “We respond well when he gets on us. And he knows how to get under our skin. It's a good thing.”

The most recognizable change the Warriors have made under Kerr is an offense that has more ball movement, breaking away from the isolation-heavy system Jackson used the previous three years.

Kerr's style has flavors of the triangle offense from his days playing for Phil Jackson in Chicago, the pace-and-space attack of Gregg Popovich in San Antonio and the up-tempo schemes assistant coach Alvin Gentry ran when Kerr was the general manager in Phoenix.

Kerr kept the same core principles his predecessor installed on defense, which was already among the best in the NBA, and the all-around game has given Golden State unrivaled results.

The Warriors began Tuesday ranked No. 1 in shooting (48.1 percent) and opponents' shooting (42.2 percent). They were leading the league in offensive (110.4) and defensive (97.8) efficiency, which measures the number of points per 100 possessions, and averaging an NBA-best 27.3 assists.

It's precisely the kind of efficient and entertaining style Kerr sold to Warriors owner Joe Lacob and general manager Bob Myers during the interview process. It's what lured two of the NBA's top assistants — Gentry and Ron Adams — to join him and solidified one of the league's best staffs.

Kerr recognized right away that the Warriors already were a tight-knit group, and he leveraged that team-first mentality to get players to accept new ways of doing things.

There has been more attention to detail on the coaching staff, which was sorely lacking under Jackson, who had two assistants jettisoned last year. And there has been plenty of praise to go around.

“The biggest thing I see with the coaching staff is there's no agendas, there's no favorites, there's no, ‘That's my guy, I have to rebound for him.’ Or, ‘That's my guy. I have to work with him.’ It's whoever, and whatever,” Bogut said. “Everybody's comfortable in their own skin, and I think that starts with Steve Kerr.”

Kerr still can't believe how fast things have come together with the Warriors.

After all, he worked as a broadcaster during All-Star weekend the last four years. Now he'll be the game's first rookie coach since Indiana's Larry Bird in 1998, and he's hoping it's the first of many appearances.

“My goal is to someday become Phil Jackson and complain about having to coach the All-Star game,” Kerr said, chuckling. “But I'm not there yet.”

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	36	17	79	—
Brooklyn	21	31	404	14½
Boston	20	31	352	15
Philadelphia	12	48	24	24
New York	10	43	189	26

Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	43	11	796	—
Washington	33	21	611	10
Charlotte	22	32	423	20
Miami	22	30	423	20
Orlando	17	39	304	27

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	34	20	630	—
Cleveland	33	22	600	1½
Milwaukee	23	33	566	3½
Detroit	21	33	389	13
Indiana	21	33	389	13

Western Conference

Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Memphis	39	14	736	—
Houston	32	17	679	3
Dallas	36	19	655	4
San Antonio	34	19	642	5
New Orleans	27	26	509	12

Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Portland	36	17	679	—
Oklahoma City	28	25	528	8
Denver	30	33	477	16
Utah	19	34	358	17
Minnesota	11	42	208	25

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State	42	9	824	—
L.A. Clippers	35	19	648	8½
Phoenix	29	25	537	14½
Sacramento	18	34	346	24½
Oklahoma City	13	44	245	30

Tuesday's games

Detroit 106, Charlotte 99	1451	27.4
Houston 127, Phoenix 118		
Chicago 104, Sacramento 86		
Memphis 95, Brooklyn 87	25.8	
Denver 106, L.A. Lakers 96		

Wednesday's games

Orlando 89, New York 83		
Toronto 95, Washington 93		
San Antonio 104, Detroit 87		
Boston 89, Atlanta 88		
Indiana 106, New Orleans 93		
Oklahoma City 105, Memphis 89		
Milwaukee 111, Sacramento 103		
Golden State 84, Minnesota 51		
Cleveland 113, Miami 93		
Dallas 87, Utah 82		
Portland 102, L.A. Lakers 86		
L.A. Clippers 110, Houston 95		

Thursday's games

Chicago 113, Cleveland 98		
No games scheduled		
Saturday's games		
No games scheduled		
Sunday's games		
All-Star Game at New York		
Monday's games		
No games scheduled		

Leaders

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Harden, HOU	53	441	409	1451	27.4
James, CLE	45	412	271	1167	25.9
Westbrook, OKC	39	343	283	1007	25.8
Davis, NOR	46	436	256	1129	24.5
Anthony, NYK	40	358	189	966	24.2
Cousins, SAC	40	334	281	950	23.8
Curry, GSW	51	418	206	1203	23.6
Aldridge, POR	47	433	208	1236	23.6
Griffin, LAC	51	448	245	1149	22.5
Thompson, GSW	50	397	155	1104	22.1
Randolph, MEM	52	407	111	1128	21.7
Lillard, POR	53	383	242	1138	21.5
Reed, BOS	44	347	179	930	21.1
Butler, CHI	49	322	302	998	20.4
Gay, SAC	48	338	321	955	19.9
Ellis, DAL	55	428	163	1087	19.8
Hayward, UTA	53	352	247	1042	19.7
Kucenic, ORL	50	425	181	981	19.6
Rose, CHI	43	308	128	814	18.9
Walker, CHA	42	278	167	798	18.8

FG Percentage

	FG	FGA	PCT
Jordan, LAC	243	328	72.3
Chandler, DAL	214	313	68.4
A. Johnson, TOR	211	354	59.6
Plumlee, BRO	210	314	67.2
Howard, HOU	202	351	57.5
Valanciunas, TOR	202	348	58.0
Reed, BOS	192	345	55.7
Davis, NOR	436	791	55.1
Horford, ATL	190	342	55.6
Favors, UTA	120	593	54.0

Rebounds

	G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Jordan, LAC	54	249	496	745	13.8
Brummett, DET	52	263	457	720	13.8
Cousins, SAC	40	121	377	498	12.5
Gasol, CHI	51	151	489	640	12.1
Randolph, MEM	44	170	357	527	12.0
Chandler, DAL	52	209	467	616	11.8
Kucenic, ORL	50	159	354	513	10.3
Monroe, DET	52	180	361	541	10.4
Love, CLE	52	109	430	539	10.4
Aldridge, POR	50	124	362	486	10.3

Assists

	G	AST	AVG
Wall, WAS	54	546	10.1
Lawson, DEN	51	513	10.1
Paul, LAC	54	524	9.7
Rondo, DAL	43	374	8.7
Reed, BOS	51	511	9.8
Westbrook, OKC	39	298	7.6
Teague, ATL	50	375	7.5
Carter-Williams, PHL	44	302	6.9
James, CLE	45	328	7.3
Lowry, TOR	53	382	7.2

NBA

Frosty: Frigid NYC hosting first All-Star game since '98

FROM BACK PAGE

Wade is injured and can't play Sunday, but the guys who will say it will be a special night because it will be on one of their favorite stages.

"It's going to be the best All-Star Game for me, to be able to be in the Garden," James said. "I love my fans back in Cleveland. I loved my fans when I was in Miami. But if I could have 82 regular-season games in the Garden, you know I would, because it's the mecca of basketball. You get a great feeling when you walk in there because there is so much history. It's going to be fun."

The game hasn't been in New York since 1998, Michael Jordan's last with the Chicago Bulls and the first of many for Kobe Bryant and Tim Duncan. The NBA's preference has been places where it's warm in February, and cities such as Houston and New Orleans have hosted it multiple times in recent years.

But when the Garden underwent a three-year renovation and Barclays Center in Brooklyn was built, both with \$1 billion price tags, the league decided the venues would share the weekend. The Rising Stars challenge and All-Star Saturday night went to the home of the Nets, with the game set for the Knicks' home court.

Players arrived to find painfully cold temperatures in the teens, feeling much lower with the wind, and snow possible on Sunday, when the forecast was for a low near zero degrees. Sacramento's DeMarcus Cousins, who usually spends All-Star weekend back home in Alabama, was still wearing his winter hat when he conducted his media day interviews in a hotel ballroom.

The Knicks' Carmelo Anthony wasn't worried about showing players around the city because "nobody wants to be out in this cold anyway."

"You talk about people that're

in other cold climates that're complaining that they're cold," he added.

That would include Wade, who grew up in Chicago and played in Milwaukee at Marquette, making him somewhat of an expert on frozen tundras.

"It's cold, but Milwaukee is COLD," he said. "I think Milwaukee is colder than Chicago. Seriously, when I was in Milwaukee, there was a couple of days I thought about not playing basketball ever again. I didn't want to walk to class it was so cold. I was like, I don't know if this life is for me. This is cold, but it ain't got nothing on Milwaukee cold."

Still, Wade said, he would play outdoors as a kid because he loved the game, just as kids were doing outside a community center where James, Curry and Commissioner Adam Silver appeared at an NBA Cares clinic, one of the 100 the league conducted Friday around the city's five brrr-oughs.

Silver had said earlier this week the weather was always the biggest All-Star concern for the league.

"I'm very happy so far that while it's a little colder than I would have liked, most importantly we don't have a lot of snow, and the latest I've heard is that the airports are clear and people are able to get around easy in the city," he said after the event.

The game will be a vintage New York show, featuring performances by the Rockettes and some Broadway musical actors. Anthony is battling a knee injury that could end his season after the All-Star break, but he's continued playing to take part in a weekend he says New Yorkers will never forget.

"This is one of the cities that I think most guys look forward to coming to," added Portland's LaMarcus Aldridge. "It's a fun city. There's always a lot going on. It's the fashion capital. I think guys love coming here."



JULIO CORTEZ/AP

World Team's Nikola Mirotic, right, of the Chicago Bulls, blocks a shot by U.S. Team's Kentavious Caldwell-Pope, of the Detroit Pistons, during Friday's Rising Stars Challenge in New York.

Rising Stars challenge

World team rises to top

Wiggins leads international players over US team

By BRIAN MAHONEY
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Andrew Wiggins scored 22 points, Rudy Gobert added 18 points, 12 rebounds and three blocked shots, and the World team beat the U.S. 121-112 on Friday night in the Rising Stars Challenge at All-Star weekend.

Wiggins, the No. 1 pick from Canada who plays for the Minnesota Timberwolves, was chosen as the game's MVP.

Brooklyn's Bojan Bogdanovic of Croatia, playing on his home court, and Chicago's Nikola Mirotic from Montenegro each added 16 points for the World.

Orlando's Victor Oladipo and Zach LaVine of Minnesota each scored 22 points for the U.S. team in the game between rookies and second-year players.



JULIO CORTEZ/AP

World Team's Andrew Wiggins, of the Minnesota Timberwolves, shows off his Rising Stars MVP trophy after The World team beat the U.S. team 121-112.

It was another new format for the opening game of All-Star weekend, which originated as a contest between teams of rookies, later turned into rookies against second-year players, and this year changed to the world against U.S. players.

It looked like all the other versions, with lots of 1-on-1 play and little defense beyond Gobert, the French center who impressively stuffed Nets center Mason Plumlee late in the game with the World protecting a narrow lead.

Minnesota's Gorgui Dieng of Senegal finished with 14 points and Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo of Greece had 12 points and 10 rebounds for the World.

Utah's Trey Burke scored 17 points for the U.S. and Plumlee had 13 points and nine rebounds.



TONY DESAK/AP

Miami Heat All-Star Dwyane Wade is no stranger to cold weather, having grown up in Chicago and attended college at Marquette in Milwaukee. When asked about the frigid weather in New York City this All-Star weekend, Wade replied "This is cold, but it ain't got nothing on Milwaukee cold."

SPORTS



Red Wings rolling

Detroit looking to keep playoff streak alive behind young talent » **Page 27**

NBA ALL-STAR WEEKEND

Frosty welcome

Bitter cold greets All-Stars in NYC

BY BRIAN MAHONEY
The Associated Press

NEW YORK

The NBA's All-Star show has arrived on Brrr-oadway. After years of performing only in warm-weather cities in the South and West, the midseason spectacle has come back to the bitterly cold Big Apple, where

'You talk about people that're in other cold climates that're complaining that they're cold.'

Carmelo Anthony
Knicks' All-Star, on the frigid weather currently gripping New York City

the most popular person at the player hotel Friday may not have been LeBron James or Stephen Curry, but the one handing out complimentary hot chocolates in the lobby.

Players love being in New York and can't wait for the curtain to rise at Madison Square Garden on Sunday night, but the bright lights in the big city aren't doing anything to help the teeth-chattering chilly temperatures down below.

"New York is cold as hell, man. But it's nice, it's cool," Miami's Dwyane Wade said. "I feel like the All-Star had to be in New York one

of these years. Since I've been in the league, 12 years now, it hasn't been in New York and it's mind-boggling that it hasn't, but I think it's cool that it's finally here. There's just a different vibe in New York than anywhere else."

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Ligety wins third consecutive giant slalom at worlds » Skiing, Page 25